

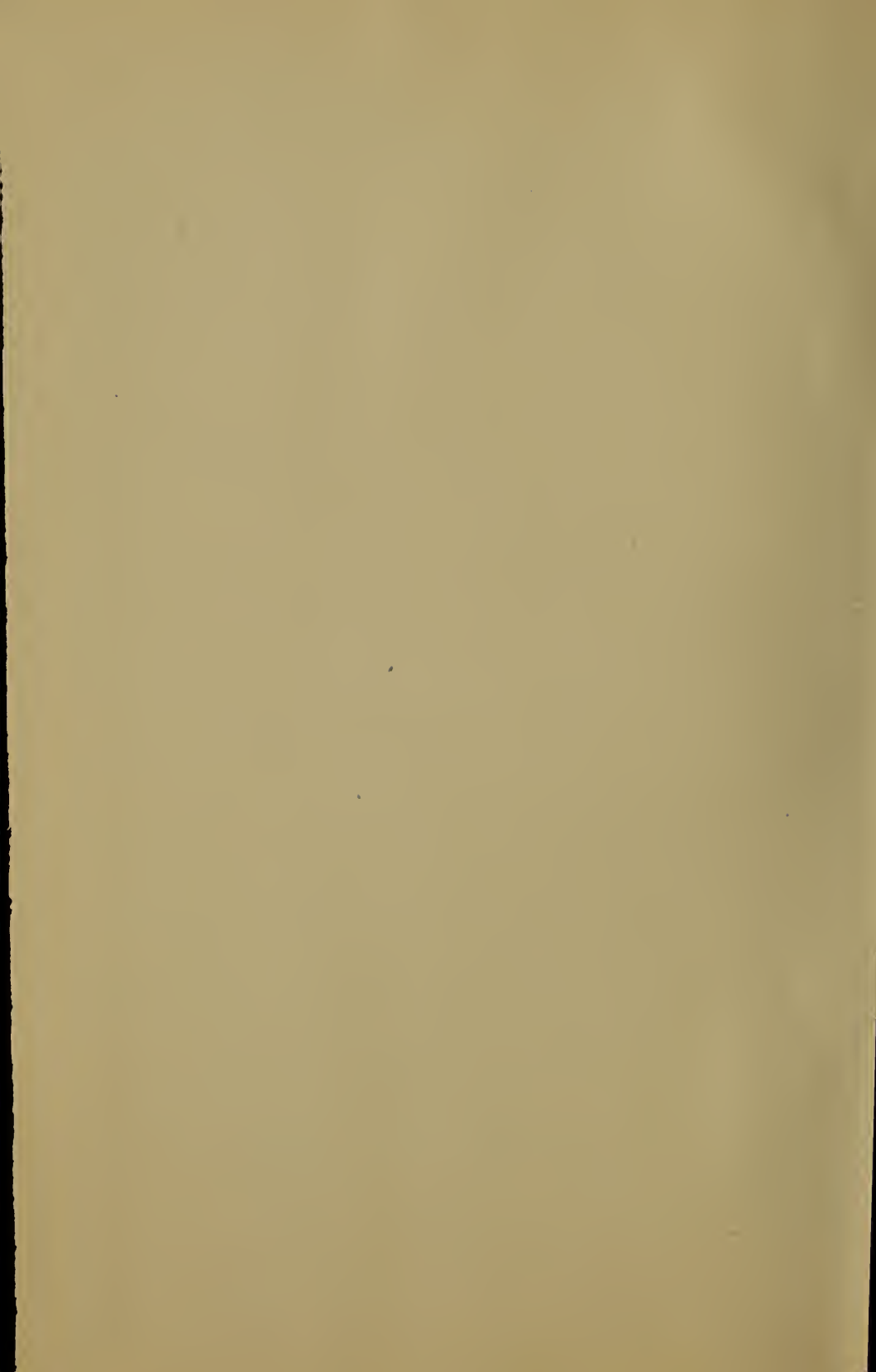


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BIBLE IDEALS

By O. L. Lyon, Ph.D.

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BIBLE IDEALS

*A Literary Study, Especially
of the Idealization and Poetry
Found in the Scriptures.*

By

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PREFACE

This book attempts to reveal some of the literary glories of the Bible. Shakespeare is great, but the Bible is shown to be transcendently greater. Tennyson is beautiful, but the Bible, has a beauty, a splendor, a spiritual touch that only God can give. All through the book the Biblical poems are compared with the best of the world's literature, and their great superiority pointed out. There is also a constant comparison with other poems of Holy Writ.

The literary beauties of the Bible have but to be seen by the Bible student to cause him to leave it for no other book. In it he finds the most charming lyrics, the most thrilling epics, the world's best idyls, unlimited sonnets, inspiring odes, lyrics of consolation not elsewhere found, incomparable short stories, letters, orations, picture galleries of portraits, doom forms, the dramatic in all of its marvelous attractiveness and earth's most heavenly rhapsodies. The present work is but an introduction to the world of truth and beauty portrayed in the Bible with divine touch.

Just as over half of present day poetry is in a prose dress, so it is with most of the poetry of the Bible. Poetry must be remembered as creative literature, and not necessarily written in verse. Viewed from a literary standpoint, the poems from Genesis to Revelation are as a series of lovely parks girding the earth.

In each poem the theme is stated, also in most cases, the bondage which caused the poet to write the poem. This bondage is called the lower antipodal point. The upper

antipodal point is the highest point of freedom given the soul by the ideal portrayed in the poem. But the main feature of the book is the portrayal of the great ideals of the Biblical poems. This is called idealization, or the means of making the theme stand out. Poetry is almost solely a matter of idealization. The last step in the treatment of these poems is the extensive comparison with both secular and Biblical literature referred to above.

The author hopes that a perusal of these poems may give the reader a little higher appreciation of God's heavenly Word, causing him to see the master strokes of the Supreme Artist of the universe in painting for us his golden gems which are ever the Christian's consolation and inspiration.

BIBLE IDEALS

The one purpose of the Bible is to set forth an ideal way of righteous living. It is a book of ideals, golden gems, to lead the soul up the heights to the beautiful heart of God. In it we find the world's greatest discipline in ideal living.

As a rule the acme of all poetry has been treated prosaically, exegetically, theologically. This, no doubt, has its value, but too often the miners have been satisfied with obtaining dull lead instead of gold and diamonds. The beauties of the old Book which fire the soul to the highest, and which should be treated synthetically, have been so dissected by the keen knife of analysis that they have at times appeared as grinning skeletons.

In this age of the world when friction is becoming less, when the providence of God is more disseminated than ever before, when man is catching the vision of world sympathy, world thinking, and world ideals—when the beautiful in both material and immaterial things is taking hold of the human heart with ever increasing force, is it not time for us to view the scriptures from their beauty side, from their ideal side? Men today are paying more money for the beautiful than for any other one thing; they are seeking after it and are ascending by this search. The ugliness of sin must hide itself when the beauty of righteous ideals appears on the scene.

It may be truthfully said that the constant aim of the Bible is to reveal the ideal. The soul is ever urged onward to a realization of its possibilities, the appeal being constantly to the better or higher self. The Bible most fully expresses the soul's consciousness of the possible in human attainment,

the ought-to-be. It tends to make one feel about himself and his fellow man, as he ought to feel. One, in studying the Bible, becomes sensitively conscious of the limitations of the soul, and more and more strives to throw them off and realize the ideal possibilities of life. The Bible, then, is an eliminating process, and more, a regenerating process. The bondage in which the soul finds itself is ever being warred against. Ideal character or ideal life is the goal. Anything that hinders this realization is antagonistic. Too often love is commercial, having the alloy of selfishness. The Bible attempts to eliminate this alloy and to make love pure and constant as in Ruth, Joseph, Jonathan, Paul, and the Christ. Faith, that anchor of the soul, is usually crippled by the demons of fear and doubt. These monsters are put to flight in such poems as Psalm XXIII, Gethsemane, Shepherd Scene, and Job. Even demons cannot face such a thunderbolt as, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." Lovely friendship, the greatest stimulant of the human soul, is only too often degraded by selfish elements. But the Bible has given us types of friends like David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Timothy, John and Jesus, that enable us to live in ideality what we are too often denied in reality.

In studying the Bible we all feel an urging to a higher and more perfect life. We see in Paul, the master man of all ages, a life inspired by the highest, and are impelled to follow in his footsteps. John presents to us an ideal of heroism and truest love, and we feel an inner longing to realize such an ideal. The real meaning of the passage, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," has its explanation in this longing of the soul to realize an ideal held up. Jesus is such a perfect ideal that, held up in his beauty and loveliness, he is drawing continents to himself.

The Bible by its ideals furnishes a galaxy of moral and spiritual beauty unsurpassed anywhere. Abraham for his sublime faith, Jonathan for his abiding friendship, Joseph for his fidelity, Samuel for his great souled devotion, Christ

in his constancy of love, and scores of other ideals so beautifully portrayed in the Bible, will never cease to inspire the world to higher things. Prayer is made ideal by the emphasis which Jesus gives it, not only in word but in practice. Says he, "Men ought always to pray." No other being has so emphasized this ideal means of communication with the Infinite. He even prayed for his enemies and reinforced his prayer by dying for them. Of no other reformer can it be said that he was always an exemplar of his own teachings. The ideal of forgiveness is rendered divine in Joseph and Jesus. Love is made an ideal leveler in the establishment of the Church of Christ among the Jews and Gentiles; and so it levels all distinctions in the divine economy. In Peter and the Prodigal Son we see love an ideal conqueror. Ideal repentance is seen in David, Jacob, Peter, Paul, the Pentecostans, and the Prodigal Son. Indeed do we find the world's most precious diamonds in the ideal realm of the Bible.

As in secular literature, so in the Biblical, the ideals differ in degree of idealization. This can be seen at a glance in going from the Old Testament to the New, also in passing from the virtues exemplified in men to the same embodied in Christ. The great zeal of Paul gives us higher ideals than those observed in men of less enthusiasm for the Master.

Let not any reader think that ideals cannot exist in reality. Jesus was both the real and the ideal at the same time. No one could consider him a literary creation. The friendship of Jonathan and David, so ideal to us, was real to them. The heaven of peace and joy that fills the soul at times, does not become unideal by becoming real. "Home, Home, Sweet, Sweet Home," remains ideal tho it becomes real, so it is with Christian experiences which bring us "fullness of joy."

No difficulty need ever come from viewing the Scriptures from the ideal standpoint, if one will but remember that literary ideals have been realized by some, and that the highest reality is ideality.

To those who know poetry only by its verses, stanzas, metre, rhyme, rhythm, melody, in short, by its form, it may seem strange to consider thought in a prose dress as poetry or literature; but content far outweighs form, and it is from this side in the main that we view the Bible. Just as we find some of the best of poetry in essays, novels, and oratory, so the Bible reveals to us a wealth of literature, though it is largely in a prose dress. The Biblical literature bears the tests of poetry in content, such as idealization, universality, true philosophy of life, great types, freedom, the true, the beautiful, and the good, and characters as universal individuals.

CREATION.

Gen. 1, 2:1-3.

This sublime poem has for its theme the *majesty of God* or *absolute power*.

The Book of Books begins in a more sublime strain than does any other poem or book ever written. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In Memoriam, Aeneid, Iliad, or any Shakspearian play does not compare in majesty. We are plunged at once into the deepest sublimity, the really unthinkable, for who can think creation? Man thinks apperceptively, but creation is not subject to such a law. A panorama of worlds and life flashes before us in such rapid succession that we are dazed, we are stunned. The inexplorable, for instance, light being summoned when there was no moon, no sun, no stars, ever dazzles us. We can only stand off and wonder. Let science do what it will, it can never clear away the mystery of creation. God speaks from a God-standpoint, and His thoughts are as high above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth.

In this poem the majesty of God is revealed on as grand a scale as in the Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed. Nothing in secular literature or in the Psalms compares at all favorably with it.

TEMPTATION

Gen. 2:4-3.

Disobedience is the one idea running thru this epic.

We are taken out of the paradise of obedience into the woe-begone world of disobedience.

Perhaps only the divine mind could paint the beauties of Eden, the first home of man. All the beauty of all the parks in the world would perhaps not equal the loveliness of Eden. Then too, Adam and Eve have truth, beauty, and goodness in their ideal untarnished state. Adam must have had supernatural knowledge to name all things as he did. In such a paradise and with such blessings of wisdom and God's company, for one to give them all up for nothing is the puzzle of the ages. Deception creeps in, symbolically represented in a wily form, and overturns their heaven. How easily is the human mind tricked! Disastrous are the consequences; guilt arises and innocence flees away; clothing is tacked on, and they tremble in the presence of God. Adam, man-like, tries to lay the blame on Eve. "The woman thou gavest me." They are dismissed from the Garden and sent forth to earn their food by the sweat of their brow. The earth is cursed and made to bring forth brier and thistle. A marvelous change comes about in both material and mental conditions.

The idealization is very great, for the happy pair lose not only their paradise of Eden, but also the image of the divine. Furthermore, by heredity they entail the same loss of the divine image on all posterity. They change, too, the whole economic order of the world.

This poem may well be compared with Christ's temptation in the Wilderness. If Christ had failed as Adam and Eve did, the world would have been doomed; but as it resulted, all was gained in Christ's obedience that was lost in Adam's disobedience. "As in Adam all men die, even so in Christ are all men made alive."

CAIN AND ABEL

Gen. 4:1-15.

Selfishness or *being self-centered* is the theme of this epic. We are swept from the black selfishness of Cain to the beautiful unselfishness of Abel.

Cain is a tiller of the soil; his brother, a keeper of the sheep. One is righteous; the other unrighteous. Each offers a sacrifice to the Lord. Righteous Abel is blessed, but selfish Cain is not blessed. An angry scowl comes over his face, causing the Lord to tell him that if he were righteous he would be blessed. Watching his opportunity as Absalom did, Cain slays his brother in the field.

The Lord comes on the trembling culprit and asks him where his brother is. The liar answers, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" But the Lord fastens the crime on him with a few brain-racking statements. For instance, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Then he sentences him to be a wanderer on the face of the earth. Cain writhes under this and says, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He also tells the Lord that men will find him and kill him. To prevent this, the Lord puts a mark on him, and pronounces a sevenfold vengeance on the man who slays Cain.

The idealization of selfishness is rather high, for it is the Lord pronouncing sentence directly. The punishment is so great as to be seemingly unbearable to the murderer; and, furthermore, it is so great as to cause even the Lord to mark the culprit in such a way as to protect him from the vengeance of his fellow man.

Saul, Jacob, Judas, the duke in *My Last Duchess*, Shylock, and many others come to mind in thinking of self-centered Cain. Indeed has the world swarmed with such examples, for self is the colossal source of all sin.

In Abel we see a man well named, Abel, able to do right. The first man on earth to die, and that for righteousness,

this is rather remarkable. Martyrdom for principle is as old as man, and as honorable as truth.

EPIC CYCLE OF ABRAHAM

Gen. 12:24.

The Cycle of Abraham comprises a group of epic stories connected with his life. As a whole, the one idea running through the stories is *faith and obedience*.

1. THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

In the call of Abraham we see *marvelous faith*. Called upon to leave his home, native land, all he holds dear, he obeys without a word, and goes forth, not knowing whither he is going. It takes a real hero to do such a deed.

2. FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

On account of famine in Canaan Abraham is forced to go into Egypt. Here we see a strong touch of the human in our hero. Because of the great beauty of his wife, Abraham thinks it safest for him to tell Pharaoh that Sarah is his sister. This deception causes the monarch to take her to his own house with the intention of making her his wife; but the Lord so plagued Pharaoh and his household that the monarch sends Abraham and Sarah away from the Kingdom, at the same time reproving the patriarch for his *deception*.

3. ABRAHAM AND LOT.

In the next story of the cycle we are led to admire the great *magnanimity* of Abraham, his complete unselfishness, where he gives his avaricious nephew choice of the country for himself, and takes what is left. The awful destruction of Sodom is the sequel to the selfishness of Lot.

4. ABRAHAM AND HAGAR.

The cycle is now marked with another blot, *doubt*. Sarah doubting God, tired of waiting, thinks Uzzah-like to help God along, and gives Hagar to Abraham. Ishmael and the

Ishmaelites form a sad commentary on this doubting Thomas. Like John the Baptist in prison, Sarah could not stand suspense.

5. OFFERING OF ISAAC.

The highest point of idealization to which the cycle rises, is in the offering of Isaac. We are here given a *type of faith like unto God sacrificing his only son*. Isaac is an only son, the promise of Abraham's old age, whom the patriarch is called on to sacrifice. No one can imagine the torture of Abraham's heart when the Lord tells him to sacrifice his seventeen year old boy. Yet believing God as he does, Abraham, without consulting his wife, starts to Mount Moriah to carry out God's command. During the fifty-five mile ride the father has sufficient time to consider it. To see the father and son kneeling with arms about each other there by the altar is heartrending; but Abraham does not hesitate. As he raises the knife to slay his son, the angel of the Lord calls to him, not to touch the boy. Who can tell the bound of the old man's heart at this command? Looking around he spies a ram in a thicket, caught by his horns. This he offers as his sacrifice.

The idealization here could hardly be higher. Abraham would quickly have given his own life rather than that of his son. The idol of his heart, the hope of all the future of the religious world, lay in Isaac, but he must give him up. This is typical of what is plainly taught in both Old and New Testament, that the surrender must be complete. *Everything* must be given up to the Lord; the dearest idol of the heart, we must be willing to give up. God gave up his all in all, his only Son, and so Christ gave up his all in all. The Rich Young Ruler was asked to give up the idol of his heart, but refused.

We shall have to go to the atonement or to Job to find a parallel to this idealization. Job after giving up his pos-

sessions, his ten children, and being vexed with boils, said, "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Any quibble in this poem over God's seeming cruelty or his lack of knowledge of Abraham's faith is foolish. God forever put the ban on the common custom of human sacrifices. No test short of this one would have been the highest. God knew Abraham's faith, but perhaps the patriarch himself did not know the strength of his faith. Then the lesson to future ages has stimulated millions to greater faith which is so needful to the soul's highest welfare.

6. WOING OF REBEKAH.

This cycle closes with the wooing of Rebekah, in which we see *marriage as heaven-directed*. This may be taken as a type of such an ideal. Beautiful indeed is this little bit of romance.

Abraham as one of God's heroes compares favorably with Moses, Paul, and John the Baptist. Great faith characterizes the life of each.

JACOB CYCLE

Gen. 27:47.

From *Deception to Righteousness* is the one thread running through the cycle. This fact is remarkable inasmuch as Jacob, the deceiver, became the founder of the chosen people of God, the Israelites, called after his new name.

1. THE STOLEN BLESSING.

The cycle begins in a lie, the stolen blessing. Here *deception* receives one of its highest idealizations in the world's literature. An old blind husband and father is deceived by a wife and son. The lie is not only told but acted out. The skin of a kid is put on Jacob's hands and arms to make them hairy, so he will pass for Esau. The trick works and Jacob receives the blessing, but later in life he gets it all paid back to him with good interest.

2. JACOB FLEEING.

Next in the cycle we see the effect of Jacob's gross sin; he must flee to escape the wrath of Esau. As he lies on the ground at night, with a stone for a pillow, he realizes to some extent what he has done. Under such circumstances it is no wonder he sees such a vision of angels. Furthermore, he little realizes that he is never to see father and mother again, and that he is to be among deceivers like himself for twenty years.

3. JACOB AND LABAN.

The next step in the cycle is Jacob's relations with Laban. It is "Greek meets Greek"—two of a kind have met. *Retribution* is at work, and Jacob finds it difficult to be satisfied with his own game being constantly played on him, not only in his marriage relations but also in flocks.

4. JACOB'S CONVERSION.

The highest point in this cycle is Jacob's conversion. The man can no longer live in an atmosphere of deception. He takes his flocks and family and starts for Canaan. Like Paul of later times he is in an agony of soul. Symbolically speaking, Jacob wrestles with an angel all night. This is nothing more than the giant struggle of his soul to give up its selfishness, deception, and evil, and surrender to the divine. The conflict results in victory for Jacob, for the Lord blesses him and changes his name from Jacob, which means deceiver, to Israel, which signifies Man of God. This certainly is a typical conversion, and we shall see a new Jacob throughout the remainder of the cycle.

5. JACOB AND ESAU MEET.

The next narrative in the cycle is the meeting of Jacob and Esau. Here we see love conquering. Jacob has a new heart filled with love, and he certainly shows it. His outraged brother is coming with four hundred men. What must

Jacob do? What can he do? His only recourse is what is now natural, to conquer by love. So he sends his brother a very valuable present, and goes out himself to meet him, bowing seven times to the earth before Esau. This with the present is too much even for Esau. He bounds forward, falls on his brother's neck, and they both weep, a sight which reminds us of Joseph forgiving his murderous brothers, or the Father forgiving the Prodigal Son.

Esau sees that a wonderful change has come over his brother. No more is he stingy, little, and deceiving, but big-hearted and generous. This change that is seen in Jacob's generosity and loving treatment of fellow man, is typical of the change which comes over any one when he is genuinely converted.

This poem on love's conquest reminds one of the conquest of love in (1) *Winter's Tale*, (2) *Cymbeline*, (3) *Gareth and Lynette*, (4) *Geraint and Enid*, (5) *The Princess*, (6) Christ's treatment of Peter when the latter denied him, (7) Jesus' treatment of erring men in general.

6. JACOB BLESSING HIS SONS.

The cycle closes with a poem of Antique Rhythm in which we see the patriarch has made a complete change. From a deceiver he has risen to be a prophet of God. He blesses his sons and foretells to some extent their future. Indeed has the transition been wonderful.

In some respects we might compare the cycle of Jacob to the Vision of Sir Launfal, or the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, or to Paul's career. In all of these we see a remarkable transition from the very bad to the very good.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

Genesis 37:47.

Second only to the story of the Christ in interest, is the present one. In fact Joseph in many respects is a type of Christ, and according to the best authorities this is the world's

best short story. The theme of this Epic History, as one calls it, is *deliverance*. Some choose to make it *perfect life*.

1. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

The brothers of Joseph are jealous of him, he being their father's favorite. All but Reuben determine to kill him. Judah proposes to sell the boy for twenty pieces of silver, to lie to their father, and tell him that a wild beast has devoured Joseph. To prove his death they dip the hated coat of many colors in a kid's blood and give it to Jacob. The brothers seem heartless, almost savage with the seventeen year old boy. They do not appear concerned for their sobbing brother in the pit as they are eating their dinner under the noontide sun. Little do they care what becomes of him when they sell him. He can languish in prison for thirteen years, three years of it being in the inner dungeon. What care they? Thru it all we see Joseph spotless. Believed dead by his father, hated by his brothers, persecuted by the fiendish wife of Potiphar, no one on earth to sympathize with him, still he can say, "Thou, God, seest me." This is enough for Joseph. Such a *God-consciousness* should characterize every child of God.

Whittier echoes this in Nauhaught the Deacon, when he makes the tempted old Indian say, "Nauhaught, be a man."

Let us now pass from the hell which Joseph's brothers gave him, to the heaven which he gave them.

2. JOSEPH RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL.

The scene changes. Joseph is made second ruler over all the land of Egypt, for he has stood by God, and in return God has been standing by him. The interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams has brought him this promotion. Famine sets in and compels Jacob's sons to seek corn in Egypt to keep from starving. It is now Joseph's time. What shall he do? Shall he pay his brothers back in their own coin? No, never. Instead he sends them back home heavily loaded with corn, and

their money in their sacks. Later, when he can stand it no longer, we see him falling on his trembling, fearing brothers' necks, kissing them and weeping over them—a bit of heaven in contrast with the hell they had given him. Hé brings his father and brothers into Egypt, puts them in Goshen, the best of Egypt, and nurtures them throughout the long famine. After the father dies, Joseph is just as good to his fearing brothers as he was before. Only the Prodigal Son, God's and also Jesus' treatment of erring humanity, can compare adequately with the divine beauty here manifest. Desdemona in forgiving the man that killed her, Enid in forgiving Geraint, Imogen in absolving Posthumous, Hermione in pardoning Leontes, Valentine forgiving Proteus, Arthur in forgiving Guinevere, Hero in pardoning Claudio, Jean Val Jean in setting Javert free, are stars of similar magnitude.

PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

Exodus 6:15.

We have here the most spectacular means of *deliverance* given in Holy Writ. The compromising Pharaoh is brought to the point of submission to the wish of Moses, tho his compromising spirit finally costs him his life.

At one time we see the rivers running red with blood, the fish dying, stench and raging thirst afflicting every one. Now the land is filled with frogs. Next we see lice everywhere, a veritable scourge; all the cattle, too, are plagued with murrain causing death. At another time hail accompanied by running lightning and thunder seems to threaten the land with utter destruction. Locusts, too, in blinding clouds, eat every living thing remaining. Darkness which can be felt fills the land, and there is no relief from it. Flies plague the people, and also fearful boils. Finally the Angel of Death passes over and kills the first born throughout the land. This is too much for Pharaoh, who has been compromising after each plague. He now urges the Israelites to depart at once, which they proceed to do. But the old habit comes back

on the compromiser, and he pursues the Israelites with his army. Attempting to cross the Red Sea as the children of Israel had done before him, he is engulfed in the closing waters.

In this picturesque bit of imagery we see Moses freeing three million slaves without the loss of a single man. God is directing and working thru him as he did thru Gideon and Abraham. A feat of deliverance so great, done by a man single handed, can nowhere else be found.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

Num. 21.

The story of the Brazen Serpent has for its theme *faith* as well as the *providence of God*.

We see the Children of Israel journeying thru the mountain fastnesses around Edom to get to Canaan. Food becomes scarce, and they begin to grumble. As a result of their complaining, serpents are sent to plague them. They are seen darting everywhere, in and out of their tents. Their bite is very painful, soon causing death. Something must be done to stop the plague. Moses, with a message from the Lord, comes to their rescue. He puts up a Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, and tells the people that anyone who will but *look* at this Serpent will be instantly healed—healed just for a look! Men, women, and children in great agony are dragged to their tent doors and caused to look and instantly the fever and intense pain leave them.

The plague has come upon them as a result of disobedience, and now if they are cured, it must be thru obedience. They must exercise enough faith to look.

The idealization here is beautiful indeed. Only a look to find life! So it is with the sinner who looks to Jesus believing fully in him.

“Look and live, my brother, live,
Look to Jesus *now* and live.”

The poet here tells the whole story. Poems are recalled that have a simillar high degree of idealization; namely, "The Hem of Jesus' Garment," and "The Centurion's Servant." In the one case the woman merely touches Jesus' garment; in the other the officer says to Jesus, "Only speak the word and my servant shall be healed." Such faith Jesus marveled at.

THE EPIC OF BAALAM

Num. 22-24.

Nowhere else in the Bible do we have the significant theme of *compromise* so well idealized. Baalam seems to try to see how near the edge of disobedience he can go without tumbling over.

In the poem the antipodal point opposite to compromise is not treated, but it is plain what it must be.

Balak, the king of the Moabites, fears the Children of Israel. He seeks Baalam, the prophet, in order that he may triumph over the people of Israel. An embassy is sent to Baalam, who, at God's suggestion, refuses to receive them and sends them back. God's words are, "Thou shalt not go with them." Balak now sends a more noted embassy. The prophet is tempted with offers of worldly honor and seems to yield to their request to go with them. "It will promote thee unto very great honor," says Balak, temptingly. The Lord does not say "no" absolutely, to Baalam, but is displeased with evil.

As Baalam proceeds, an angel three times intercepts the way, causing the mule to sidestep and at last to fall down. Baalam loses his temper and maltreats the animal which has better vision than his master. After being rebuked by the mule, Baalam gets his eyes open, sees the angel, and is told that the beast has saved his life.

Baalam goes on and meets Balak, who at once hypocritically sacrifices to God to deceive Baalam. Balak asks Baalam to curse Israel for him, but Baalam informs Balak

that he can speak only the words of God. The first time Baalam is stationed where he can see all Israel. Consulting the Lord, he receives a message of praise and blessing for Israel. Balak now takes him where he will not be inspired by so much of Israel, but the prophet delivers a similar blessing. Now Baalam is taken from Pisgah to Peor, a less advantageous place, and a similar result follows. Angrily Balak dismisses Baalam, telling him that his God has ruined his life prospects.

Baalam seems to keep up his dallying, for at a future time he suggests that tho Israel may not be conquered by force, it may be by lust. The resulting war finds the compromiser among the slain. Thus he receives a compromiser's reward.

This is a telling bit of idealization in which a great prophet met his doom by tampering with sin. How general is the principle! Heroes like Savonarola, Paul and Christ, who will not tamper a moment with that which squints in the wrong direction, are rare. If Baalam could have staid with his first resolution where he said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord," how happy he might have been; but no, he listens to the siren voices of gain and honor which ruin him.

In secular literature we fail to find any great poem, unless it be *Coriolanus*, idealizing this theme. The little fable of the Spider and the Fly has the same theme.

FAITHFULNESS VERSUS UNFAITHFULNESS

Deut. 32.

The theme of this vivid lyric is the *faithful and unchangeable God*. He is pictured as the immovable rock, the Gibraltar of the universe.

Vividly indeed is the faithfulness of God set over against the unfaithfulness of Israel. The psalm begins in excellent strain:

“Hear O heaven, and give ear O earth.”

Then God is portrayed as a being who is perfect, a God of faithfulness, just and right.

We see God taking the Israelites out of a desert land, a howling wilderness, and placing them in a land flowing with milk and honey. The loving Father keeps them as the apple of his eye, and makes them to feast on the fat of the land. But they become perverse, crooked, and lightly esteem the Rock of their salvation, serving other gods, committing abominations, and finally becoming utterly unmindful of the God who gave them birth.

They brought on themselves calamities. Nature is all but set on fire against them, and universal destruction seems imminent. Not only the figure of consuming fire is used, but the wrath of their enemies is made fiery. Says Jehovah, “The teeth of beasts will I send upon them, with the poison of crawling things of the dust.”

But when the people fall to their lowest, it seems the Father is moved with pity for them, and mother-like he begins to foster them again; but his vengeance rests heavily on their enemies.

It would be difficult to find a better example of loving faithfulness to a fickle people; however, the story of the Old Testament is almost one continuous series of similar incidents, though as a rule not so highly idealized. Much of Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel is recalled by the poem.

JOSHUA CYCLE

Josh. 2:24.

The theme of the cycle is *faith and obedience*. In these respects Joshua is very much like Abraham. Both are very strong in faith, and therefore almost perfect in obedience.

1. CROSSING THE JORDAN. Josh. 2-4.—The moving idea in this story is *faith in the all-sufficiency of God*.

It certainly takes great faith to accomplish such a mighty undertaking.

A raging torrent is in front of the hosts of Israel, the swift flowing Jordan is out of its banks. What is to be done? It must be crossed. The priests carrying the Ark walk boldly up to the rushing torrent and as their feet strike the waters, the river begins to divide and wall up above, so that the entire host pass over on dry ground. Twelve men are detailed to carry twelve stones out of the river and erect a memorial to the incident. As the priests leave the river bed the waters come together again.

The idealization of faith is as great here as at the Red Sea when the waters divided before Moses. Joshua is very much exalted in the eyes of the people by this exhibition of sublime faith. In fact, he is put on par with Moses, the old beloved leader. His faith is rather remarkable inasmuch as he is young as a general, and has had but little divine manifestation in his behalf before. When about to be stoned for standing by the right as heroes, Caleb and he had been saved by the Shekinah light flashing out in the Tabernacle. We fail to find comparisons in secular literature, for the latter is confined to viewing things from the human standpoint. Man does human deeds and not God-deeds. The one is heaven—high above the other.

2. SIEGE OF JERICHO. Joshua 5:13-6—Both *faith* and *obedience* are strong as organizing ideas in this remarkable story. Probably obedience or *doing God's work in God's way*, is more prominent.

A powerful people are in front of Israel, behind walls which mount up to heaven, if we are to take the report of the ten spies. But Joshua, undaunted, marches straight up to the great city. He sees a man in front of him with a drawn sword. Going up to him he finds him to be the angel of the Lord who tells him just how to proceed and assures him, too, that the city is his.

Joshua, pursuant to the plan of the angel, begins one of the strangest sieges ever known to man. So foolish does it appear that the general will not permit anyone to say a word about it. If people now had such a prohibition put upon them, they would die of tongue paralysis! Every day Joshua cries out to Israel, "Forward." They, keeping at a safe distance from the walls, march around the city. When the people think something is going to be done, Joshua's command rings out, "To your tents, O Israel." This strange procedure is kept up for six days. It must have been amusing to the great Anakims on the walls ready to hurl their big stones down. No doubt these monsters made much sport of the little "grasshoppers" performing such gyrations below them.

On the seventh day the affair becomes stranger than ever, for the Israelites march around the walls seven times. What can they mean by such actions? When the ram's horns blow and Joshua commands the people to shout, the doomed city realizes what it all means, for the great walls tumble down, and the entire city is put to the sword.

God's plans may be strange but they win. Some question, "What can a few women and still fewer men do by their prayers, with the world, the flesh, and the devil?" Yes, what *are* they doing? Whole continents are being turned to righteousness.

Faith and obedience are very highly idealized. Joshua had learned that the Lord means just what he says, and that he had better do God's work in God's way.

One is reminded of Naaman the leper, who was told by Elisha to do such a strange thing; but had he not obeyed and dipped himself *seven* times in the Jordan, he would have remained a leper. So it is in becoming a Christian; some people hardly see why we must go thru the initiatory steps laid down by Christ, but it is *absolutely* certain that it is safe to go thru with them. If man will do his part, God will

always do his. The Lord's ways may be past finding out, but they are not past obeying.

3. SIEGE OF AI. Joshua 7—8:29.—The third incident in the Joshua cycle has for its theme *disobedience*. God cannot for a moment bless such, even with a commander like Joshua. The impossibility of concealing sin, and the involving of others in our sin, are prominent ideas in the story.

In the story we are carried from the utter failure of disobedience to the complete success and great rewards of obedience.

Joshua learning thru spies that the men of Ai were but few, sends three thousand men to capture it; but they are defeated and driven back with considerable loss. Joshua seems almost to lose his faith, for he falls "on his face before the Ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua says, 'Alas, O Lord, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? *Would* that we had been content, and dwelt beyond Jordan!'" Then he tells the Lord that all the peoples in the country will hear of his defeat and will combine and swallow up Israel. He reminds one of the Israelites in the Wilderness sighing for the flesh pots of Egypt. Alas, how weak, how fleeting is man's faith!

God rebuked Joshua, saying, "Get thee up; wherefore art thou thus fallen upon thy face! Israel hath sinned." Root out the sin, sanctify yourselves, get right with me, clean up, and the victory will be yours. Joshua does this and destroys Achan the covetous man, with all his possessions in the valley of Achor. Fearful is the destruction, including all the children of Achan. They are stoned and burned, together with the coveted silver, the Babylonish mantle and the golden wedge, a fearful warning to future disobedience. Probably in that age no other remedy would have been effective in deterring such people.

Now the Lord tells Joshua that he will give Ai into his hand. Leading thirty thousand men in person, Joshua invests Ai, placing an ambush back of the city, and making a feint in front. The trick catches the people of Ai, for they think Israel is fleeing as before. So all the men of the city rush out in pursuit of Joshua's forces. At a signal from Joshua, the ambush rises up and burns the city. The men of Ai seeing themselves surrounded, perish by the sword of the Israelites.

This bit of idealization of disobedience compares favorably with the numerous times during the Rule of the Judges when, thru disobedience, Israel would be plunged into abject bondage for years. Whenever they would recognize God, he would deliver them. Throughout Israel's history this fluctuation between obedience and disobedience continues with similar results in each case. Strange that man is so slow to perceive that God *means* what he says. Right on the heels of a sweeping victory at Jericho there follows an inglorious defeat at Ai, but God will be glorified in the eyes of his people, and even by a chosen leader like the meek Moses he cannot for once bear to be misrepresented in the eyes of his people. He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.

OTHER INCIDENTS OF THIS CYCLE. Joshua 2, 9, 10.—The first of these is the spies who are sent to Jericho to gather information. They take refuge in the house of a harlot by the name of Rahab. She eludes their pursuers, conceals the spies, lets them down over the wall, and makes it possible for them to escape. They, in turn, for her *faithfulness*, promise to protect her and all the household in the siege; this is done. The idealization consists in the divine protection of such a low woman who had proved herself faithful. In the New Testament we find Christ releasing a woman from the grip of a body of men who wanted to stone her. She is the same kind of woman, but evidently none of her accusers is without sin.

The second incident is the deceptive embassy of the Gibeonites. These people come in old clothes and in such a pitiable condition that Joshua believes their story of woe, and promises to protect them. Three days afterwards he learns that he has been grossly deceived, that they are his neighbors. He, therefore, makes them slaves, hewers of wood and drawers of water. These deceivers are quickly overtaken by *retribution*, as were Jacob, David, Saul, Macbeth, Hamlet, Brutus, Othello, Iago, Leontes, Antony, Cloten and hundreds of other characters both in Biblical and secular literature.

The third incident is the league of five kings against the Gibeonites for their alliance with Israel. Here the Gibeonites find out the value of an alliance with good people. Joshua comes to their rescue and gains a great victory. With his men and God's hailstones, and the sun and moon standing still, he is enabled to drive the kings into utter ruin. The five kings are hanged to five trees.

The miraculous part of this battle calls up "the stars fighting against Sisera," Gideon's sweeping victory, Jericho, and Sennacherib's defeat.

DEBORAH'S SONG

Judges 5.

In this martial ode we see the Joan of Arc of the Old Testament. She is a type of simple faith, a type of deliverance thru faith. The poem is a war song greater even than Flodden Field.

Israel has been in bondage to the Canaanites for twenty years, a bondage almost indescribable. The highways are deserted, people being compelled to go in the byways for any safety at all. Both person and property are unsafe. Jabin is lustful and therefore unbearable. No man can be found to initiate a rebellion, but Deborah, whose only ambition was to be called a mother in Israel and to do the right thing, heads the movement. She secures the co-operation

of seven of the tribes, five refusing, engages Barak to help her, and moves against the mighty armed hosts of the enemies. Sisera and Jabin feel themselves invulnerable, but God by the storm in the plain of Esdraelon fights for Israel.

“The stars in their courses fought against Sisera,
The river Kishon swept them away.”

The invulnerable are driven from the country, and once more the children of Israel breathe the sweet air of freedom.

This poem has about the same degree of idealization as has Gideon's deliverance. Since the miraculous is not found in secular literature, no comparison can be made outside of the Bible. Real genuine heroism is not shown more in Esther than in Deborah. With the odds so tremendously against her, this gallant leader manifests an Abrahamic faith.

GIDEON'S BAND

Judges 6-8.

A faith that dares is certainly evident here, a faith that dares to do the impossible.

Israel has been for seven years in the bondage of the Midianites. Gideon, a simple countryman, is appealed to by the angel of the Lord as the nation's deliverer. He is thunder-struck at the idea, for he thinks he is nothing, the least of the least. Several signs of divine encouragement are given him before he consents.

With thirty-two thousand men he proceeds against the host of one hundred and twenty-five thousand men, but God tells him he has too many. Gideon asks every man to return home who is afraid to proceed; twenty-two thousand prove cowards. Still God says, too many, for they will say, *we* did it. “Mine own hand hath saved me.” Give them the test of drinking in the presence of the enemy, and he that lappeth like a dog, take him. This is done, and nine thousand seven hundred do not meet the test; only three hundred men

are left to go against one hundred and twenty-five thousand men. Does Gideon waver? Not in the least. He is buoyed up by a dream which is spreading consternation through the camps of the Midianites. Each man of his band takes an old jar and puts a light in it. Then they surround the Midianites and at a signal all break their jars, and thus the Midianites are rimmed with light. In consternation they fight one another, and great is the destruction. Israel is once more free, and remains so for forty years.

Such faith as is here idealized can be found only in the great Bible heroes like Abraham, Elisha, Deborah, and Isaiah. Since the faith of each of these is unshakable one can hardly show differences in idealization.

JEPHTHAH'S RASH VOW

Judges 11.

Notwithstanding the fact that Jephthah was one of the deliverers of Israel from bondage, the theme that is most prominent is *rashness*.

The Ammonites have held Israel in bondage for twenty years. Jephthah, a harlot's son, appears as a deliverer. Jephthah promises God that if He will give him success against his enemies that he will sacrifice to *Him* the first person who comes out of his house to meet him on his return.

He gains the victory, and on returning he sees his lovely daughter, his only child, coming with timbrels and dances to meet him. His heart is pained, but he thinks he must keep his rash vow. The unwise father gives his daughter but sixty days in which to prepare. This time she spends with her girl friends roaming over the hills and old loved haunts.

This slaughter of the innocent is pathetic beyond description. The father has sixty days to think the matter over, and yet does not relent. Even Herod in his rashness is not nearly so bad, for John the Baptist was not a kinsman.

Furthermore, Herod was drunk and much excited, in the presence of his lords; he was also a king who thought his word must be made good.

RUTH—AN IDYL

In this lovely idyl we see *friendship* most beautifully idealized. Not only types of friends are presented to us, but also ideal Christians. The transition from the carnage and roughness of Judges to the love and domestic relations of Ruth is delightful. It is almost like finding a flower in the burning sands of the desert.

Famine in Bethlehem drives Naomi and her family into Moab, where her husband soon dies. Her sons, contrary to Jewish laws, marry Moabite women. Calamity befalls Naomi a third time in the death of her two sons.

On hearing that plenty has come to her native land, Naomi kisses her daughters-in-law goodbye and tells them to remain in their own country. The charming personality of this good woman so wins Orpah and Ruth that they weep bitterly and request the privilege of going with her. The mother dissuades them by telling them they can have no hope of ever obtaining husbands in her own country and that it is best for them to remain in their country. Orpah then kisses her mother-in-law farewell, but Ruth pleads,

“Entreat me not to leave thee
And to return from following thee:
For whither thou goest, I will go,
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God;
Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried:
The Lord do so to me,
And more also,
If aught but *death* part thee and me.”

This ideal pledge of friendship wins the loving heart of Naomi. They set out for Bethlehem and are greeted kindly on their arrival. But Naomi has lost her estate and is now very poor. Ruth sets herself to work to gain a support by gleaning in the field. Boaz is a kinsman of Naomi, therefore the gleaning is done in his field. The master is attracted toward Ruth and shows her favors. Naomi plans, according to the customs of the day, how a union may be brought about. Ruth obeys to the letter and is successful in winning the affections of Boaz. The result is a happy marriage. Naomi sees again the sunlight of God's presence returning to her. Her joy is complete when little Obed, the grandfather of David, is laid in her arms.

The idealization is certainly great. Ruth leaves her own father and mother, kinsmen, native land, religion of the fatherland, chance to become the wife of another, for uncertainties. Her love is so great that she gives up these certainties to go into poverty, into a new and a strange land, and to adopt a new religion. She seems inseparable from Naomi, lives only for her. We see here the devotion of a Jonathan, an Horatio, a Damon, a John the Evangelist. Such constancy is heavenly!

Both Ruth and Naomi are types of Christians in their devotion, constancy, spotless lives, perfect obedience, and sweet Christian spirit.

These genuine Christians may be compared with Dorcas, Eunice, Lois, Hannah, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. On basis of friendship the comparison may be made with Jonathan and David, Damon and Pythias, and Jesus and John. The examples of friendship idealized in literature usually fall short of the beautiful oneness of Ruth and Naomi. Too often also there are detracting influences in one or the other of the friends, but not so with Ruth and Naomi.

THE CYCLE OF SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1—28.

Throughout this cycle we see Samuel, a type of *righteousness*. No more perfect type can be found in the Old Testament unless it be Joseph.

1. BIRTH OF SAMUEL. 1 Samuel 1-24.—The theme of this story seems to be *consecration through prayer*. Hannah is finally brought to this high state of Christian experience.

Elkanah, the husband of Hannah, lives up in the hill country of Ephraim. Being barren, Hannah feels that a curse is upon her. She is taunted with her barrenness by Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah. For years it seems that all Hannah desires is to have the curse removed from her; but the Lord wants a man, a judge, a prophet. Womanhood is at a very low ebb in Israel. It takes God some time to make Hannah great enough in soul to be the mother of the great man that he wants. It requires a great woman to be the mother of a great man. Finally by prayer in the Temple, Hannah comes to the point of promising the Lord that her son shall be dedicated to Him from infancy, and be brought up in the Temple. When she comes to the point of entire consecration, the Lord removes her curse; she bears Samuel, and presents him in the Temple to be brought before the Lord.

This bit of idealization is perhaps a hint to mothers. If they were more devoted to God's work and needs, if they were willing even in the antenatal state of the child to dedicate him to the Lord, the great dearth in Christian workers and especially ministers might be largely removed. As long as it is so generally thought that God does not operate on the human soul even through the mother's mind, we may expect this dearth to continue.

In some respects, the birth of Samuel may be compared

with that of Isaac, Samson and John the Baptist. In all four cases the children were promised, but only in Elizabeth and Hannah do we find the deep devotion that worked so mightily in making their children strong men of God.

2. THE CALL OF SAMUEL TO SUCCEED ELI. 1 Samuel 3-4.—In this story we see *righteousness enthroned and unrighteousness dethroned*. This is a characteristic procedure in the Lord's work.

Eli himself is an excellent priest, but his sons, Hophni and Phineas, are profligates, adulterers, and almost if not altogether, blasphemers. The Lord tells Eli that his sons cannot succeed him, and that they must perish.

Young Samuel, like Jesus, increases in favor with both God and man. At the early age of nine he hears the Lord calling him. The first three times he thinks the voice is Eli's. The third time Eli sees it is the voice of the Lord, and tells the child how to proceed. The fourth time the Lord calls, He tells Samuel all that is to happen to Eli and his sons. In the morning the boy reveals to Eli his doom and that of his sons.

Later, in the Battle of Ebenezer, the Philistines discomfit the Israelites. The Ark is brought up from Shiloh, the Israelites thinking this would make them successful; but they learn that externals alone are not to be trusted in at all, for the Philistines kill about thirty thousand of the Israelites and capture the Ark of the Covenant.

When the news of this battle was reported to Eli, he fell over backward and broke his neck.

Righteousness, which is an internal affair, is highly idealized. Altho the Ark of the Covenant was brought out, this external thing could do them no good, for their hearts were not right. God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. Even tho Hophni and Phineas are sons of God's high priest they must go down.

We are reminded in this story of Aaron's two sons who

offered false fire on the altar and were struck dead. They dared defy the law of God, and met their doom instantly. The father was forbidden even to shed a tear.

3. THE ARK AND THE PHILISTINES. 1 Samuel 5-7.—Probably in no other scripture have we a better treatment of *sacrilege*. The Philistines learn a bitter lesson from experience.

At the battle of Ebenezer the Philistines capture the Ark of the Lord. They take it to Ashdod and sacrilegiously set it up by their god Dagon, but in the morning they find their old idol on his face before the Ark. The image is put in its place only to fall down again that night before the Ark and break off its hand and head. The people are also smitten with tumors and many die. The Ark is removed to Gath and afterwards to Ekron with similar results. So many perish because of its presence that it is looked upon as a scourge.

Finally the Philistines determine to rid their land of the plague. They put the Ark on a new cart and hitch two milch kine to it. With the Ark they send five golden tumors and five golden mice as a guilt offering so that the plague may be stopped. Without a driver the cows are sent away. They go lowing up to Bethshemish. For looking into the Ark, the people of Bethshemish to the number of fifty thousand and seventy perish. In consternation the stricken land urges the people of Kiriath-Jearim to come and get the Ark. This is done, and the Ark finally rests in the house of Abinadab, and Eleazor is made priest to keep it.

This awful scourge for sacrilege reminds one of the handwriting on the wall at Babylon when such gross sacrilege was being practiced. Another case like it is the sacrilegious act of Aaron's sons in offering strange fire on the altar. All along the pathway of history are instances of this flagrant sin being committed. God may spare at the time, but the reckoning time will come.

4. SAUL ANOINTED KING. 1 Samuel 8-11.—*Com-promise or man's ways versus God's ways*, is the theme of this story. As Baalam and Pharaoh were compromisers, so were the children of Israel afflicted.

Samuel is growing old, and his boys like Eli's are a curse to him. They love money, twist the law, and are professional grafters. For these reasons the elders of Israel meet and tell Samuel about his boys, and ask for a king to rule over them. This hurts the faithful old prophet; it sends him to prayer. The Lord tells Samuel that it is not himself that has been rejected but the Lord. Samuel is further counseled to yield to their wishes.

The prophet sets before them the evils of a king; still they clamor for a king. At last he yields to them and anoints Saul the son of Kish as king. The young man at the time is out after his father's mules. When approached on the subject, Saul, like Gideon, declares that he is the least of the least, that he is not worthy; but he cannot escape.

When anointed king, Saul is an excellent young man. God gives him a new heart, endows him with the gift of prophecy, and fits him for large usefulness. The people are astonished that Saul can prophesy.

The first trial of the new king comes soon. The boastful Ammonites proceed against Jabesh, and promise to spare the town on condition that all right eyes be gouged out. Seven days are asked in which to see Saul and prepare for action. He soon raises a large army and completely destroys the Ammonites. Then the people proceed to Gilgal to recrown him.

5. ANOINTING OF DAVID. 1 Samuel 16:1-13.—The central idea in this story is *God's choice versus man's, or inner worth versus outward appearances*. "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh upon the heart."

Saul thru disobedience has lost the crown. The Lord tells Samuel to cease mourning for him and go to Bethlehem

and anoint a king for Israel; but the prophet fears and replies, "If Saul hears it, he will kill me." God commands him to go and sacrifice at Bethlehem, and while there anoint the one pointed out to him. Samuel obeys and sets out for Bethlehem. On arriving the elders come tremblingly to meet him, asking if he comes peaceably. He assures them he does, and invites them to the sacrifice.

The fine looking sons of Jesse are one by one made to pass before the prophet. Samuel is so well pleased with the fine countenance and imposing stature of some of them that the Lord has to warn him that "the Lord looketh upon the heart" and that "man looketh on the outward parts." The ruddy-faced lad, David, is not with his big brothers but is tending the sheep. Upon inquiry of Samuel, Jesse sends for the lad. When he appears, the Lord says to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." Then we are told that "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward."

The idealization here is high, for Samuel is a good, old, experienced man of God, and yet he is deceived by outward appearance. Probably the anointing of the tall young man, Saul, had fooled him.

6. WITCH OF ENDOR. 1 Samuel 28:3-25.—*Utter despair, or the effect of rejecting God*, is the theme of this lurid piece of imagery. Like the Raven it has no rift in the dark clouds for an upper antipodal point.

Saul has slain all the priests, and now when he needs one to communicate with the Divine, he has no medium. Therefore he seeks the Witch of Endor. Tomorrow he must meet the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa. What the outcome is to be, he yearns to know. The Witch brings up Samuel from the Shades, who tells the monarch that his doom is sealed, that on the morrow his people are to be defeated and he is to be killed. In utter horror, the king falls prostrate.

Sad indeed is the fate of the man who was so noble

when young. He was even a prophet, the spirit of God operating mightily upon him; but thru disobedience, thru rejecting God, he fell into consuming jealousy, envy, hatred, malice, revenge and even remorse, a very nest of reptiles which he might have avoided. Woe unto the man who, in his hour of success, feels himself sufficient and thereby leaves his God out of account! Man is never in such a dangerous position as when he is on the mountains of worldly success.

In degree of idealization this poem may be compared with Judas, and also Macbeth. Horror is the end of each, a fruit that sin bears.

CYCLE OF SAUL

1 Samuel 9-28.

In this cycle we have a type of *a good man falling to the lowest thru disobedience*. We see a noble young man in search of his father's mules, finding not only them but also a kingdom. He is even blessed as a prophet, and rewarded with many victories in the early part of his career, before he forgets his God.

1. RAID ON MICHMASH. 1 Samuel 13-14:46.—In this story Jonathan is represented as a type of *remarkable faith*, while his father Saul is seen as a type of *rashness*.

Inspired by great confidence in God's power, Jonathan, with only his armor-bearer, attacks the Philistines who are harassing Israel, and discomfits them single-handed. The Israelites becoming aware of the victory being won by the gallant Jonathan, pursue the Philistines with much slaughter. Saul, burning for revenge on his enemies, pronounces a curse upon any one who would stop to eat before evening. The command is rash to begin with, for who can do his best when ravenously hungry? The outcome reveals the lack of wisdom and utter rashness of the king. Jonathan being very hungry takes a mere taste of honey which revives him. Then the

Israelites are so weak for want of food that they fail to slaughter the Philistines as Saul had planned.

At last the hungry Israelites fall on the spoils like wolves on their prey. They eat even the blood, and thus sin in God's sight. Something must be done; the unclean thing must be destroyed. Jonathan confesses to his father what he has done. The awful sentence is pronounced by the father upon his princely son, but the Israelites defy Saul to execute it; thus the noblest of men is saved.

Faith is idealized here as much as it is in David going against Goliath, or Gideon putting to flight the Midianites, or Elisha taking prisoner the army sent to surround him. In all of these instances the dependence rests solely on God. Jonathan shows his great faith in God by many or by few. When approaching the garrison of the Philistines, they mockingly say to Jonathan, "Come up unto us, and we will show you a thing." The heroic prince takes the banter, believing God will fight for him, as he does, even causing the earth to quake.

Rashness is idealized here as much as it is in Jephthah offering his only daughter as a sacrifice to fulfill a foolish vow that he has made.

2. AMALEKITE WAR. 1 Samuel 15.—*Disobedience* receives a very high degree of idealization in this story, for we see the Lord's own anointed deposed from being king because he refuses to carry out God's orders.

Samuel sends Saul against the old enemy of Israel, telling him to destroy everything in the way of life and property. Saul, like Aaron's sons and Uzzah, thinks he can do as he pleases. Therefore he saves the best of the sheep and cattle, and spares Agag, the king of the Amalekites. This angers Jehovah, who says to Samuel, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandment." This causes Samuel to cry unto the Lord all night.

The next morning early Samuel goes to meet Saul, who is now at Gilgal. On meeting him Saul, thinking a half loaf will do for the Lord, says to Samuel, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But Samuel replies, "What meanest this bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Says Saul, "*They* have brought them from the Amalekites, for the *people* spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." Then came the stinging words from the prophet, "When thou wast *little* in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" Saul again affirms that he has obeyed the voice of the Lord, and has brought the sheep and oxen to Gilgal to sacrifice. Samuel knowing that Saul has not obeyed, replies, "To obey is better than sacrifice," and as an ultimatum he further says to the king, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Saul now confesses his sin, but lays the blame on the people. Samuel turns to leave, is restrained by Saul, but wrenching away from the monarch, the prophet leaves a part of his garment with the unhappy ruler. Saul now pleads so hard with Samuel going away that the prophet turns and honors him once more.

To give Saul a lesson in obedience the prophet calls for King Agag to be brought before him. Taking a sword, Samuel hews the King to pieces. The prophet now leaves Saul never more to see him "until the day of his death." Long does Samuel mourn for Saul, a fallen soul!

Saul in his disobedience is guilty of at least two flagrant sins. 1. He refuses to destroy everything as commanded. 2. He lives in the Jewish Age where men are prophets, priests and kings. Therefore no king has a right to offer sacrifice. This Saul dares to do, thinking he can do as he pleases, but when too late he finds out that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God when opposing him.

This poem may be compared with Moses' sin at the rock where he disobediently strikes it twice and does not give God the glory, or with the disaster at Ai caused by disobedience, or with the deposing of Eli's profligate sons and Samuel's greedy boys who had developed into grafters. Indeed, is the way of the disobedient hard.

One of the dire effects of Saul's disobedience was the anointing of David by Samuel, which fact we have already seen. This caused a bitter feud to arise between the two men.

FEUD BETWEEN SAUL AND DAVID

1 Samuel 16-31.

This is what Dr. Moulton calls an Epic History. The great underlying principle of it all is *jealousy*, a consuming fire like it is in Othello.

After David is anointed by Samuel at Bethlehem, the spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and he becomes troubled with an evil spirit instead. David is sent for, to charm away the spirit by means of his music. The monarch is much pleased with the lad as long as he is not jealous of David.

The Philistines are encamped against the Israelites, each on opposite mountains. For forty days, Goliath, a giant nine feet and four inches tall, heavily armed, comes out in the valley and defies Israel. David coming up from tending his father's sheep hears the taunt and takes it up. He says, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of God?" Eliab, his oldest brother, berates the youth, asking why he left the sheep, and taunting him with the epithet "proud." David turns away from him, goes to Saul, and tells him that he will fight the Philistine; but Saul replies that he is too small and that he is a youth. David assures him that he can conquer the giant, for he has succeeded in slaying single-handed a lion and a bear that attacked his sheep. Then says Saul, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

Saul puts his armor on the little fellow, but David rejects it, for he has not *tried* it. Taking a sling and five smooth stones he goes to meet the giant. Goliath is disgusted and says to the youth, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with stones?" Then Goliath tells David to come to him that he may give David's flesh to the fowls of the air. David replies to him in substance that he comes in the power of the Lord whose armies the Philistine has defied, and that he trusts in God and not in arms as does the Philistine. David tells him plainly that, "The Lord saveth not with sword and spear," and that his doom has come. The monster makes for David, while at the same time the youth runs toward him and slings a stone which buries itself in his forehead. The giant falls on his face, and David seizes his sword and beheads him. The Israelites then pursue and slaughter many of the Philistines until they come to Ekron.

As a result of this fight, David is made general of the king's armies. In everything he conducts himself wisely, as becomes a man of God. But one day when the general is returning from a victory over the Philistines the women come out of the cities dancing and singing: "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." This so angers Saul and stirs up his jealousy that he determines to kill David, for says he, "What can he have more but the kingdom!" The evil spirit comes upon the monarch and he hurls his javelin at David, but the Lord is with his own. Then Saul plans to have him killed by demanding a hundred foreskins from the Philistines for the hand of his daughter Michal who has fallen in love with the ruddy youth. David gives him two hundred and marries his daughter, but he becomes even more attached to Jonathan, who "loved him as his own soul."

Saul is more and more determined to take David's life. He even tries to get Jonathan and his servants to slay him; but Jonathan brings about a temporary reconciliation. This, however, lasts but for a brief time. David wins new laurels

in a war with the Philistines, thus causing Saul's jealousy to be fanned to a flame. Saul's daughter has even to let her husband down from a window that David may escape the messengers of the king sent to slay him. The hardness of Saul's heart may be seen from the fact that he wants to slay David with his own hands when his daughter reports to him that her husband is sick. A bogus sick man is substituted by Michal, much to the disgust of Saul.

David is now an outcast pursued by Saul. Jonathan, attempting to defend him, narrowly escapes being pierced thru by a spear which his father hurls at him. At one time the fugitive David is compelled to play crazy in order to escape. He now takes refuge in the cave of Adullam, where he collects a band of four hundred men.

Saul in desperation goes so far as to kill eighty-five priests who seem to have given David something to eat when he was famishing. All the priests perish except Abiathar, who escapes to David. Even their city with all the women and children is destroyed by the jealous demon. Is it any wonder that Saul had to go to the Witch of Endor when he desired to know the will of the Lord?

David is pursued by Saul from one hiding place to another. When in the cave of Engedi, David comes upon Saul and cuts off the tail of his garment, but restrains his men from slaying the king. When David is gone some distance from the place, he holds up the severed part of the garment to show Saul how kind he has been to him. This touches the king's heart, causing him to weep and make a covenant of safety with David, at least for his posterity. The king for the time being gives up the pursuit, but David stays on the safe side.

Not long after this Saul learns that David is in the hill of Hachilah. Again the King proceeds against his son-in-law, and again Saul is delivered into David's hands, for while Saul and his army are asleep, David and Abishai come up and take Saul's spear and 'cruse of water which are at his

head. David restrains Abishai from killing Saul. Standing away on top of a mountain David upbraids Abner for not guarding the king better. When Saul sees again how precious his life has been in David's sight, he repents and asks him to return, but a treacherous serpent can not be trusted. David despairing of any safety in the land of Israel, goes over and seeks quarters with the Philistines. They seem glad to have David and his army, and give them a place to live. Here they dwell for one year and four months.

This sad feud ends as evil always must end, in the destruction of the evil one. The Philistines go up against Saul on Mount Gilboa, but David does not accompany the Philistine army. In a severe battle Saul's three sons are slain, and the army defeated. Saul in despair begs a man to kill him, but the soldier refuses. The unhappy, sin-cursed, vengeful, demonized man then runs on his own sword.

In this bit of epic history, jealousy is given an idealization that seems to make it the food of demons. As in Othello, cyclone-like it sweeps the soul rapidly into the vortex of destruction. In Leontes, Posthumous, Claudio, General Chas. Lee, Joseph's brothers, Cain and the Pharisees, we find parallels with their awful accompaniments.

DAVID'S ADULTERY

2 Samuel 11-19.

The theme of this story is *retribution*. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Tho a great king, David could not escape the awful results.

The king coming out in his house-top sees a beautiful woman bathing. He is enamoured at once, tho she is Uriah's wife. He sends for her, and commits the blackest of all sins. Then he practices deceit upon the husband, even going so far as get him drunk in order to cause him to go to his home. But neither by flattery, as on the first meeting of David and Uriah, nor by drunkenness does David succeed.

He must resort to more extreme means. He has Joab put Uriah in the very forefront of the battle, and has him murdered.

Bath-Sheba mourns for her husband. At the end of this mourning, David takes her to wife.

The Lord is very much displeased with David's heinous sin. He sends Nathan to David to cause the king to pronounce sentence upon himself. This David does unwittingly. The greedy rich man, of whom Nathan speaks, seizes the one little lamb of the poor man, instead of going to his own great flocks. This so enrages David, that he instantly declares such should restore the lamb fourfold. Says Nathan, "Thou art the man."

The father's infamy starts a feud among David's sons which is more destructive than the one which once obtained among Jacob's sons. The king's sins are naturally visited upon his children.

Amnon loves his half-sister Tamar, who is Absalom's own sister. Thru treachery Amnon succeeds in disgracing his sister, a matter which is worse than death to her. Absalom bides his time and kills the adulterous beast about two years afterwards. This causes Absalom to flee from the presence of David for three years. Then he is brought from Geshur to Jerusalem, but for two years the king will not see him. This act of David is only hardening Absalom as Gloster hardened the heart of his son Edmund.

Now Absalom, the beautiful young man, so suave, so kind to every one, steals the hearts of the people. Feigning to the king that he wants to go and worship, he sets out for Hebron and is proclaimed king. David flees from Jerusalem, and if Absalom had moved immediately, David would soon have been no more. But Absalom's delay causes his downfall, for Joab is soon strong enough to meet Absalom and annihilate him.

The four children whose cold dead lips David had to kiss as a result of his own adultery are (1) Bath-Sheba's child,

(2) Tamar, (3) Amnon, (4) Absalom. In addition, his own great sin is the very thing which led up to Absalom's rebellion and death, which almost tore his very heart out of him.

Rarely in literature do we find such a high degree of idealization. It is paralleled to some extent by Jacob's deception practiced by him on his old blind father, and then returned upon him by his own boys. Throughout Shakespeare as well as the Bible, we find the ravages of retribution, but none perhaps worse than in David's case.

ELISHA CYCLE

2 Kings 2-13.

Faith and obedience seem to be the organizing idea in this cycle. Elisha was the most worthy successor of Elijah.

1. ELISHA PARTING FROM ELIJAH. 2 Kings 2:1-18.—*Making first things first*, is the inspiring theme of this story. Like Mary who chose that better part, so Elisha pleads for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. He desires to be a worthy successor to the great prophet and a true representative of God.

Elijah seems to be testing Elisha to see if his heart is fixed. Three times the old prophet tells Elisha to tarry while he goes to Bethel, to Jericho, and to the Jordan, but three times the request is refused in these words, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Just as one should never lose sight of the Christ, so Elisha is determined never to leave his channel of communication with God.

When they reach the Jordan, Elijah strikes the waters with his mantle, causing them to recede so he and Elisha can pass over on dry ground. Then Elisha makes his famous request of Elijah. "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." This is said in reply to the prophet saying to him: "Ask what I shall do for thee,

before I be taken from thee." Elijah replies, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." The idea seems to be that Elisha must keep his mind fixed on the *right* to the very last, just as one must never take his eye off of Jesus. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

Elisha after this wonderful experience picks up the prophet's mantle and returns to the Jordan, smiting it as Elijah had done, with the same result. On meeting the fifty sons of the prophets who had been watching the movements as far as possible, these fifty ask if they may hunt for Elijah to see if he is not somewhere among the mountains. At first Elisha refuses, but to please their whim he grants the request. After searching for three days they return without Elijah, as Elisha knew they would.

This is one of the striking incidents of the Scriptures where first things are made first, a thing so rarely done in life. It calls up (1) Solomon choosing wisdom rather than riches, (2) Moses choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, (3) Abraham's unselfish choice, (4) Jesus' choosing to make his Messiahship spiritual. While such mountain peaks of faith are rare, yet it should be understood as Biblical and according to reason that Jesus will not take a second place in any one's heart. He must be made first or not at all. Scripture, reason and experience are as clear as daylight on this point.

THE HEALING OF THE WATERS. 2 Kings 2:19-22.—The little incident is typical of *healing*. The waters of the city are naught, yet the city is a pleasant sight. When this

is told to Elisha, he takes a cruse containing salt and purifies the waters. This water healed by Elisha has remained good until the present time.

The incident may be typical of the healing of the human soul by the Divine. The unregenerated soul is not pure at its fountain and therefore needs divine healing that will abide.

3. THE MOCKING CHILDREN. 2 Kings 2:23-25.—The theme is *irreverence* which is so common and reprehensible.

The prophet is on his road to Bethel when some children begin to taunt him, saying, "Go up, thou bald head, go up, thou bald head." Elisha turns back and pronounces a curse in the name of the Lord on the irreverent children. Two bears come out of the woods immediately and tear forty-two of them. The prophet then continues his journey to Mount Carmel.

This is certainly an awful lesson to irreverent people. It reminds us of the irreverence done to the Lord's vessels at the feast of Belshazzar when he had to view the ominous handwriting on the wall. Also we recall Aaron's sons choosing unholy fire and attempting to offer it on the altar. The God of Israel in each case showed clearly that his commands must be respected and obeyed.

4. THE WATER TRENCHES. 2 Kings 3:4-27.—As in hundreds of places in the Scripture, one sees here the *providence of God* idealized.

Israel is threatened by the Moabites. King Jehoram appeals to Jehosaphat, Judah's king, to help him. The latter agrees to do so. Elisha is appealed to when the army is threatened with destruction from thirst. He tells them that for Jehosaphat's sake he will act. They are ordered to dig the valley full of trenches. These are filled with water without any rain. When the Moabites look on the valley, **they think that the water is blood, and that the Israelites**

have destroyed themselves. The Moabites proceed to the camps of Israel for pillage and the Israelites fall on them and gain a great victory.

This recalls Sennacherib's invasion, Gideon's three hundred, Joshua's blowing the ram's horn at Jericho, and many other similar incidents where the Lord caused his people to gain a great victory.

5. THE VESSELS OF OIL. 2 Kings 4:1-7.—The central idea in this story is *God our source*. This consoling idea is also common in the Bible. To those who trust God, he is always found sufficient.

We see a woman very much distressed, for she is in debt, and her two sons are to be taken for the debt. She appeals to Elisha, reminding him that her husband is dead and that he had been a good man. The prophet asks her what she has in her house; her reply is a pot of oil, nothing more. Elisha tells her to borrow all the jars she can, go to her house, shut herself and two boys in, pour out the oil into the jars. This she does until all are full, and then she asks for another jar which can not be furnished. The oil ceases to flow then. Now she sells enough to pay her debt, and lives off of the rest of it just as the good Elisha had directed her.

This comforting story reminds us of Elijah and the cruse of oil that never diminished; also the miracle at Cana, the feeding of the five thousand where we see Christ a sufficiency, also the feeding of the four thousand. No parallels to these are found in secular literature, for the miraculous does not play a part in such. Man can write and act only as man, but God moves heaven-high above man.

6. THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN. 2 Kings 4:8-37.—This woman is a type of *devotion to the Lord, unselfishness, reciprocity, faith and persistence in prayer*. She is an ideal Christian, or what a true Christian ought to be.

Even the Lord calls her a great woman living in Shunem.

She invites the prophet in to eat with her; then asks her aged husband to build a room to their house for the preacher, and furnish it so that he will turn in and rest whenever he comes that way. Hospitality certainly reigned in that woman's heart.

The prophet is so pleased with his room that he asks the woman what he shall do for her. Like Herve Riel she asked nothing for her hospitality, but Gehazi reminds Elisha that she is barren. The prophet tells her she is to be blessed with a child, but like Sarah of old, she doubts. Nevertheless as the prophet foretells, the child is born in due time and grows to manhood. But one day when in the field with his father he puts his hands to his head and exclaims, "My head, my head." He is carried to his mother and put in her arms where he soon dies. She carries him to the prophet's bed, speeds away to Carmel for Elisha, and beseeches him to come and help her. She will not let him go until he promises to accompany her. On arriving at Shunem he stretches himself twice on the young man, life comes back to him. The mother in joy and thankfulness prostrates herself to the ground before the prophet.

This may be compared with Martha and Mary losing their brother. The faith of the Shunammite is more highly idealized, for she appears to trust the prophet to restore her son to her.

7. NAAMAN THE LEPER. 2 Kings 5.—*Obedience* is the central idea in this story. This is one of the most striking illustrations of the effects of strict obedience.

Naaman, the Syrian general, is a leper. A little Jewish maid in his household tells Naaman's wife that a prophet in Samaria can cure him. The king sends Naaman to the King of Israel. The latter rends his clothes when he learns of Naaman's mission, but Elisha hears of the general, and sends for him to come down. Naaman goes down expecting the prophet to come out and wave his hand in some way and call on the Lord of heaven to heal him. But instead, Elisha

does not even come to the door. He sends a messenger to tell Naaman to dip himself seven times in the river Jordan. This enrages the general, for Elisha is not doing just as Naaman *thought* he would do. Man's *thought* does not change God's plans to man's way. Some personal workers go to Naaman and reason with him, telling him that if the prophet had told him to do any great thing, how quickly he would have done it. He sees the point and goes to bathe in the Jordan as directed, and comes again to the prophet entirely cured. He begs Elisha to take pay but the latter refuses outright.

The servant of Elisha, Gehazi, has an eye for profit. His greedy soul cannot let such an opportunity pass. He therefore runs after Naaman, lies to him, and receives two talents of silver and two changes of raiment. When he returns he has to lie to Elisha, but the prophet tells him that his heart went with him, and that for his perfidy the leprosy of Naaman shall light on him and his seed forever. And we are told that "he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." Fearful indeed are the consequences of disobedience to right. Deception and greed have wrought sad havoc through the centuries.

This idealization of obedience is well worked out. We are reminded of the obedience of Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, and Moses, and the disobedience of Uzzah, Aaron's sons, and Saul. Life, joy, and success come through obedience, but turmoil, anguish and death come through disobedience.

8. ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE ELISHA. 2 Kings 6: 8-23.—The themes of this story are: (1) *The sufficiency of the Lord.* (2) *The right spirit toward enemies.* God is ever all-sufficient to the one who relies completely on Him.

The Syrians are irritated because Elisha informs the King of Israel of every move made by his enemies. The King of Syria therefore sends horses and chariots and a great host to take Elisha at Dothan. When the servant of Elisha sees the hosts of the enemy surrounding them, he fears and tells

Elisha about it. The latter prays the Lord to open the young man's eyes so that he may see that the forces for Elisha are greater than those against him. As the young man beholds the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire, he, no doubt, realizes how little has been his faith. The need of most Christians is to get their spiritual eyes open. Too often only material objects can be seen. Elisha prays again that the Syrians may be struck blind. He then leads the blind hosts to Samaria before his king. The latter asks twice if he may smite them. "No," says the grand old hero of God, "give them something to eat." After Elisha restores their sight and feeds them well, he sends them home in peace.

Such idealization not only of the all-sufficiency of God, but also the right spirit toward enemies! Even in the boasted Christian civilization of modern times, it hardly has a parallel. Perhaps some little approach toward it may be seen in Grant at Appomattox, and the United States in the Cuban war.

On the point of sufficiency of God we may compare this poem with Feeding the Five Thousand, and Pentecost.

9. SIEGE OF SAMARIA. 2 Kings 6:24-7:20. *Faith in God's word* seems to be the most prominent idea in this story. Elisha had shown himself on many occasions to be the true mouthpiece of God, and should have been believed by the captain on whose hand the king leaned. Viewed from another standpoint the theme is *the effect of unbelief*.

Benhadad has besieged the city of Samaria. A famine has set in, and so dreadful is it that children are being eaten. The king is grief-stricken and ready to give up. All faith has gone from the captain. In the face of this dire need, and also in the face of a threat of the king to take Elisha's head, the prophet tells the people, "Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gates of Samaria." The captain makes light of it and says if the Lord would open the windows of heaven, it could not be. Elisha replies that he shall see it but not enjoy it.

That night four lepers in desperation visit the enemies' camp and find it deserted. They fill themselves with the spoils, hiding a goodly quantity, and then inform the king, who sends men with the five remaining horses to reconnoitre. They find the Syrians have fled in desperation, thinking the Hittites and Egyptians are in hot pursuit. The prophecy of Elisha comes literally true, but the captain meets his doom at the very moment because of his unbelief.

On basis of degree of idealization very few stories in the Bible rise higher. Uzzah and the Ark, Aaron's sons and the unholy fire, the unfaithful Israelites who would not believe it possible to possess the Promised Land, are similar cases. One is also reminded of Sennacherib's invasion, Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, Deborah's victory, and Gideon with his famous band. In each of these the Lord brings about great victory for his people who believe on him.

Very few cycles can be favorably compared with the Elisha cycle. In point of greatness of faith, Elijah, Joshua, and Abraham, may be cited. These were mighty men of God, because of the greatness of their faith. They were not afflicted with the modern disease of men—fear of being called fanatics.

ESTHER—AN EPIC HISTORY.

This interesting epic may have for its theme *deliverance, retribution, sacrifice, and providence of God*. Esther is also a type of shrewdness.

In the poem we are raised from pride, haughtiness, treachery, plot for wholesale murder, to true humility, open dealing, and deliverance.

The voluptuous king, Ahasuerus, has made a great feast for his lords. He commands that his beautiful Queen Vashti appear before them. On refusing to do so, she is deposed by the king in order to show other wives that they should obey their husbands.

From all the beautiful maidens assembled out of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, the king selects a Jewess as his queen, and celebrates the choice with another great feast.

A common man, Haman, has been elevated as second man in the kingdom. He, being a bigot, determines that every one shall bow to him; but Mordecai, the adopted father of Esther, refuses. This angers the bigot very much and causes him to secure from the king permission to have a general massacre of all the Jews in the kingdom on a certain appointed day.

Mordecai hears of the plot and informs Esther. She at the risk of her life goes into the presence of the King. Says she, "If I perish, I perish." The king, who has not seen her for thirty days, throws down his scepter to her and asks her request. She invites him and Haman to a banquet the next day. They accept and are royally entertained by the charming queen. Again the request is asked for by the king, and again the queen invites them to another banquet on the morrow. Haman goes out feeling that all is pleasant with him except that one shadow that has come across his life, viz., Mordecai. He erects a scaffold and determines to hang the man. Esther sees to it that the story of how he was saved from the hands of assassins by one Mordecai is read to the king at night.

The next morning Haman comes to the king to get permission to hang Mordecai, when the monarch cries out to him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delights to honor?" Haman, conceited enough to think the king means him, tells Ahasuerus to have him put on the king's royally caparisoned horse and escorted through the streets by one of the greatest princes of the city. Says the king, "Go and be Mordecai's escort and do him that honor." Almost like one about to have the black cap pulled down over his face, Haman proceeds to do this, and then rushes home to pour his troubles into his wife's ears. She tells him she

sees the shadows thickening. Just then the messenger comes to bring him to the second feast. Again the request of Esther is asked for by the king. Says the queen, "My life, and that of my people; for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish." The king in great surprise asks, "Who dares to do such a thing?" Quick is the reply, "this wicked Haman." The king rises in his wrath and goes into his garden. Haman on his knees pleads with the queen. Just then the king returns, mistakes the motives of Haman, and cries out, "Hang him on his own scaffold." This is done immediately.

Now the awful edict must be averted. Mordecai, who has been put in Haman's place, through Esther secures an edict that the Jews can defend themselves on the day of slaughter, since an edict cannot be annulled after it has been sent forth. The satraps all over the empire learning that a Jew is over them, dare not fight against him; hence on the fatal day and also the day following, the Jews have a great triumph over their enemies.

Sacrifice is highly idealized here, for Esther could not have done more than risk her life. She had all to lose, being queen of the empire, and nothing material to gain. She becomes a type of a great deliverer foreshadowing the Christ, the supreme deliverer. In this she becomes one of the world's greatest heroines. Her shrewdness compares favorably with that of Portia in the Trial Scene in the Merchant of Venice. Again, Haman is one of the Bible's best types of a man reaping what he has sown. Throughout the poem, too, we see the providence of God looking after his own.

This poem can be compared with Deborah's deliverance, and as we have said, with that greatest of all deliverances in Jesus Christ. From the standpoint of retribution this poem may be compared with a score of Shakespeare's plays. When we consider the fearful result to the future of the world if Haman's dastardly plot had been executed, the idealization may be considered higher than in any one of Shakespeare's

plays. But for vivid portrayal and blood curdling acts, some of Shakespeare's plays excel the book of Esther.

JOB

In no other book of the Bible do we find a higher idealization of the mountain heights of faith. No one could go higher than Job did when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

The form of this book is not only epic, but also lyric and dramatic. Its great hero is Job, and the whole poem is in a sublime strain. Delightful bits of song are interspersed in the book; for instance, the lyric beginning, "Let the day perish wherein I was born." Then we rarely find in the Bible or out of it a dramatic situation more striking than the Councils in Heaven, or Job sitting on the ashpile with his accusing friends around him.

To begin with we see Job one of the most perfect of men. Even God testifies to this fact on more than one occasion. When Job's children have a jubilee the father sacrifices for them, fearing lest they may have sinned. Job is faultless, sweet tempered, and self-sacrificing.

We are next taken to a Council in Heaven where God asks Satan if he has observed his servant Job, how perfect he is. Satan replies, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" "Try him," says God, "and see if our word is true." The trial is made. The Sabeans fall on his cattle; the fire from God, on his sheep; the Chaldeans, on his camels; the wind destroys all of his children. When Job in one day finds himself propertyless and childless he says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Such faith is remarkable, but still we are to see higher flights.

A Second Council is held in heaven. Again the Lord says to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant, Job? For there is none like him in the earth, perfect and upright." Satan replies, "Skin for skin, all that a man hath, will he

give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face." God replies, "Behold, he is in thine hand; only spare his life."

Now comes Job's fearful torture of boils. His wife comes in and says, "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Curse God and die." But Job mildly answers: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God and not evil?"

Job now goes to the ashpile and sits there in silence, day after day. The funmakers are no doubt many. But the news of this strange scene reaches distant lands, and his friends hearing of it come to see him. On their arrival they are so impressed with the solemnity of the scene that they remain in silence seven days weeping.

Finally Job breaks silence by saying: "Let the day perish wherein I was born."

This justification of Job by himself is too much for his friends. They openly charge him with sin, for the common idea with the Jews, even in Paul's time, was that disease results from sin. Stately Eliphaz, blunt Bildad, and old man Zopher think they are holding up the majesty of God.

Let us note the awful condition of Job when his friends attack him. He could not rest day or night. Pieces of flesh were falling from his body. He says:

"I loathe my life;
I would not live alway.
I hate my life;
I despise my life."

Job is not in a condition to take kindly these unjust charges. He grows sarcastic, and says to them:

"No doubt ye are the people,
And wisdom will die with you."

He further justifies himself and complains that God will not hear him; but he holds fast his integrity to the last, saying in an agony of suffering:

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Now Elihu, man of wisdom, takes the matter up. He says he has waited for days, *i. e.*, age, to speak, but they know nothing. Now says he, "One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee."

He sputters and fumes like a two-drive-wheel engine hitched to a mountain. We are told that he groans like the storm raging around him. But Job and even the three friends, treat him in silent contempt just as Jesus treated Herod.

At this moment God interferes and asks:

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel with words?"

"Where were *you* when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

"Who did the measuring?"

There pours forth one stern question right after another until the poor man feels a little as if he has been struck by a cyclone.

God now arraigns Job too.

Job is at first speechless, but recovering himself he replies:

"I abhor myself, and repent
In dust and ashes."

The three friends who have thought themselves the very quintessence of righteousness, are now fearfully arraigned. They are told that for safety they must have Job sacrifice for them. God tells them that Job was honest in what he said, though it was wrong; but that they were not honest. You twisted things to stand in with me; Job did not. Here we see clearly that God is on the side of inquiry.

Like the restoration in *Sir Launfal*, *Cymbeline*, and *Winter's Tale*, Job is rewarded with twice the wealth and influence he had before; also with seven sons and five daughters more.

This bit of idealization that proceeds so majestically step by step up the mountain heights of faith, has perhaps no par-

allel unless it be in Moses, Abraham, Paul, and Christ. Having so much of the miraculous in it, we cannot come into the realm of secular literature for comparison.

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

The providence of God is most beautifully portrayed in a series of changing situations. The imagery in the Bible permits a crowding of images which is not allowed in secular literature. Thus the metaphor is frequently changed.

This singing psalm, this winging psalm, this superb classic, begins with a beautiful pastoral scene. Each line explains itself, and the whole presents to us a picture of security, tranquility, and attractiveness perhaps unequaled by any of Wordsworth's heavenizing of nature.

"The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want."

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul;

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's
sake.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;

For thou art with me:

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Now such a change—we see a different image in almost every line. Just as God is with man to protect in the first scene, so in the siege which is next placed before us:

"Thou preparest a table before me
In the presence of mine enemies."

It seems that there is dire need of food, but God mysteriously provides a table right in the presence of the enemies, and shows that he takes care of his own.

Then we go to a festal scene where the guest is highly honored, and there is a feast of reason and a flood of good things:

“Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.”

The monarch minstrel now feels such a buoyancy of hope from his cup running over that he throws a lifetime pilgrimage before us, assuring us that God will ever be with us.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

This is certainly a comforting assurance, and from the very positive way the psalmist puts it, we see that he has no doubts whatever. Surely these twin angels of God’s mercy will be his constant companions.

The psalmist now returns to the church for his imagery, or he may consider this world but as God’s own large house decorated for his children, filled with beauty and swung out in a diadem of worlds. He says with assurance:

“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The faith in God’s keeping power, that breathes throughout this psalm, is comforting and inspiring, an idealization rarely equaled. We are reminded of Psalm Seventy-one, The Good Shepherd in John ten, Consider the Lilies, The Guardian Angel, and Ode to a Waterfowl.

SIXTEENTH PSALM.

Probably in no poem is *personal consecration* more highly idealized. In the sixty-second psalm, we have the words:

“My soul waiteth *only* upon God.”

But this psalm does not elaborate the idea as much as the sixteenth. Here we have the same idea in:

“I have no good beyond thee.”

Also in:

"I have set the Lord always before me."

The author seems to be *ever* conscious of the presence of God, and furthermore he is altogether satisfied with the Divine.

Beautifully does he begin this lyric:

"Preserve me, O God:
For in thee do I put my trust."

As beautifully does he continue:

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places,
Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

His joyous contemplation of his relations with the Divine does not stop even with life, for he says:

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol."

The picture of the righteous throughout the poem is one that glows with divine loveliness; it is heightened by slight reference to the condition of those who oppose God. The psalm ends with one of the most precious of divine utterances:

"In thy presence is fulness of joy,
At thy right hand are pleasures evermore."

THIRTIETH PSALM.

The lyric was occasioned by the bringing of the Ark from the house of Obed Edom up to Jerusalem. Its theme is *trust*.

David has been for some time in the slough of despondency, trusting in himself. The death of Uzzah depressed him and caused doubts to arise. But in this exulting lyric we see the sun shining again; he has passed from self trust to divine trust. His soul is filled with ecstasies as he contemplates God's goodness and extols him. He sings of the

Lord's delivering him from his enemies, from his boasting self, and from Sheol. He rejoices in the brevity of the Lord's anger and the perpetuity of Jehovah's favor, also in the fact that his weeping has turned into joy; his mourning into dancing, and his sackcloth into gladness. Exultingly he ends his song with the words:

"O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever."

Psalm thirty-seven has the same general theme, but it is not so highly idealized. One seems to come into closer heart touch with God in reading Psalm thirty.

THIRTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

This great acrostic meditation treats vividly *Trust in God versus Trust in Worldliness*. The idealization is so high as to grip the soul for great good.

In the seventy-third psalm the poet says:

"My steps had well nigh slipped,
For I was envious of the arrogant
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

In the thirty-seventh psalm through a wider vision he has gained the victory over his doubts. Says he:

"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,
Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness,
For they shall soon be cut down like grass,
And wither as the green herb."

In every illustration drawn from the evil side of life, the vanity of worldly greatness is vividly portrayed. We cite a typical illustration:

"I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green bay tree;
But one passed by, and, lo, he was not:
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

The brevity of the reign of the wicked, his vanity, the certainty of his destruction, are repeatedly set forth in the Meditation.

On the other hand in delightful contrast, the peace, the sufficiency of God to the righteous, are given in almost divine touches:

"Delight thyself in the Lord,
And he will give thee the desires of thine heart."

"Commit thy way unto the Lord:
Trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass."

"Rest in the Lord
And wait patiently for him."

"Those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the
land."

"Better is a *little* that the righteous hath,
Than the *abundance* of many wicked."

"Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down,
For the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."

"I have been young, and now am old,
Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his
seed begging bread."

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright,
For the latter end of that man is peace."

Such statements can come only from the heart of a lover. Changing the phrasing a little we may say:

"Jehovah, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

One feels perfect assurance as he reads the psalm. The contrasts too are striking.

The psalm might be compared with St. Agnes' Eve where

the effect produced is somewhat similar, though the faith is not so elaborately treated. The Ode to a Waterfowl does not come up with it in depth of feeling and perfection of faith.

FORTY-SIXTH PSALM.

This exalted lyric was occasioned by Sennacherib's invasion of Judea with one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. Isaiah's prayer-meeting with Hezekiah caused God to send destruction on their enemies. This great victory through divine interference produced several other psalms. Its inspiring theme is *God our refuge*.

Exultingly the psalm begins:

"God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble;
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the sea,
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof,
The Lord of Hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is *our* refuge."

This exalted strain is kept up throughout the poem. The refrain at the conclusion of each stanza, acts as a pile driver to fasten securely the content.

The nations are represented as raging around Judah, but when God speaks, "the earth melts."

The river of God's influence makes glad the city of God, and he is made the immovable fortification for the city. He is represented as making wars to cease throughout the world and as exalting himself among the nations. The inspiring exhortation is:

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Such a feeling of security is difficult to find.

We may compare this psalm with Deborah's Ode, Song of Moses and Miriam, Gideon's Band, Feeding of the

Five Thousand, Manna in the Wilderness. In each case the sufficiency of God is plainly manifest. He also shows himself to be our refuge, our providence, in time of greatest need. Secular poems do not attempt to idealize on the miraculous scale, but only on the natural plain, hence it is difficult to find comparisons in secular poetry.

FIFTY-FIRST PSALM.

The theme of this psalm is *true repentance*. We see a penitent praying to God to have mercy upon him. His own language most forcibly sets forth his condition. "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is *ever* before me."

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight."

"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to have joy and gladness."

"Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence."

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,
And uphold me with thy free spirit."

This poor penitent is broken in spirit, confesses his sins, pleads for forgiveness and purity of heart, and longs for the joy of salvation and freedom of spirit. This is certainly typical.

We may compare it with the Vision of Sir Launfal, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, The Winter's Tale, and the Prodigal Son. How differently the same idea is imaged in each; but the spirit is the same. The difference in the imagery does not change the abiding nature of the idea of repentance.

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH PSALM

The one idea in this poem is *lamentation*, a sighing for other days and a wailing over their misdeeds.

This elegy takes hold of the soul as much as Home, Sweet Home. We see homesick exiles sighing for their Jerusalem home, the old home church, and better days. Mournfully the psalm begins:

“By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst
We hanged our harps.”

Then the poor unfortunates are asked to sing some of the songs of their Zion, but the reply comes quickly:

“How shall we sing the Lord’s song
In a strange land?”

Thinking of their ingratitude to the old Jerusalem church, they utter undying words:

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”

The concluding stanza in a way spoils the beauty of the elegy by pronouncing such vengeance on the little ones of their captors; but when we remember that to the Jew the destruction of sin could only be brought about by killing the sinner, we can see why the harsh statements were made. The Jew is unable to abstract the sin from the sinner.

We may compare this poem with Lamentations, and also many of the strains in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; but none of these is more famous.

In contrast with this wail, is Paul founding a church

in a foreign land while he was a prisoner at Rome. He had no time to lament, but used all of his great energy in building up the Master's Kingdom.

ECCLESIASTES

In the series of essays constituting this book we have a fine bit of idealization such as we find in many of Emerson's essays. The theme idealized is *the emptiness of worldliness versus the glory of godliness*.

To begin with we see a king's son, brought up in a great court, brilliantly educated, becoming king of a vast empire extending from the Euphrates to Egypt. His Kingdom is rolling in wealth, and almost literally flows with milk and honey. The king builds a great temple to God, and is blessed beyond all men with wisdom. His fame reaches all civilized nations. It seems that he needs nothing more to make him supremely happy.

But he says one day to himself, "I will taste of worldly pleasures and see what there is in them." This causes his downfall, for he leaves God out of the account a little like the famous rich man who pulled down his barns and built larger ones; so Solomon makes for himself every convenience that wealth and ingenuity can invent. Whatever his heart desires he secures. In polygamy he goes to the limit, having seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. For the gods of some of his heathen wives he builds finer temples than to Jehovah. He becomes largely independent and gormandizes. Streams of gold and wealth seem to flow into his coffers from every quarter, and he revels in luxury and abundance.

Do these pleasure excursions of the king make him happy? From the way he wails one would think that his worldliness was a veritable Sahara desert. Says he, "There is not a just man upon the earth." It almost sounds like Vivien saying, "There is no being pure." Well has it been said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

The worst wail made by the pleasure-filled king is, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." This is the wail of a soul who is drunk with the pleasures of worldliness.

After seeing the utter emptiness of a life of worldliness, he sums up in a few words the whole of real life. "This is the end of the matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the *whole* duty of man." This is a magnificent climax reached by a process of extensive experimenting.

Probably nowhere else can we find so high an idealization of the vanity of a worldly life. Childe Harold, where Byron ranges thru the earth, especially in its supposedly great places, and finds emptiness of life wherever he goes, is perhaps the best comparison.

LYRIC IDYL—SOLOMON'S SONG

The organizing idea of this exquisite poem is *pure affection*. Probably in no other poetry is a higher type of affection portrayed.

In interpreting this poem, at least five laws must be kept in mind. 1. Inattention to sequences of time. The drama observes sequence, but the Idyl may begin at the end as is the case in this poem, and move backward and even skip about. 2. Impersonal Chorus which keeps up the story where it is not acted. 3. Refrains thrown in parenthetically which must be referred to the entire poem. 4. Reminiscences dramatized. They are given in dialog form and do not constitute an integral part of the section in which they are found. An example is when the maiden tries to ascertain who her lover is, and is baffled. 5. Symbolism. All thru the poem comparisons are made with standards of excellence. This analytical comparison is never to be pictured, but one standard is to be judged by another and thus the effect heightened. We see an example in the Shulamite's nose being compared to the tower of Lebanon.

The imagery begins with the marriage of Solomon to the Shulamite maiden. The love demonstrations are almost

excessive. The groom lovingly lifts her over the threshold of his house, and repairs to the banquet chamber. At times they discourse on reminiscences of their courtship. The bride is called "A rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley," while the groom is described as a "lily among thorns."

The story then seems to move backward to the courtship where we see the bride ecstatically recalling the happy circumstance,

"The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh.
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is mine, and I am his:
He feedeth his flocks among the lilies,
Until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away."

Next we see the happy betrothal. King Solomon, coming in state, compares his sweetheart to almost every beautiful thing in nature that can be imagined. Like Bryant in, *Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids*, he sees all the beauties of lovely nature in his bride. No greater bit of symbolism can be found in any literature. One example may be given:

"Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil."

"Thou hast ravished my heart
With one look of thine eyes."

"Drink, yes, drink abundantly of love!"

The next Idyl reveals a very troubled dream of the bride in which she is much concerned about finding her lover. She seeks him, and is even arrested and mistreated. She seems distracted because he has gone away from her for a little time.

The story now changes to an exalted and charming meditation of the king concerning his bride,

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Terzah,
Comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as an army with banners,
Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they have overcome me."

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon, pure as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners?"

Here the king exhausts his wisdom in making comparisons in regard to his beautiful queen.

The scene now changes to a longing of the bride to go back to her old home among the hills and view again the old haunts of their courting days. The king accedes to this, and they hie away to the mountains.

The lovely song closes with a renewal of their love on the Lebanon mountains. Says the bride,

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
For love is as strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave.

Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it."

The amatory relations of this poem are not excelled in idealization by Poe, Tennyson, Longfellow, or even Shakespeare. The author knows thoroughly the highest experiences of the human soul and adequately portrays them.

The poem typifies the marriage of Christ and the church. If this is given as a type of the love relations between Jesus and a Christian, how many measure up? Is Jesus the dearest name in the world? Is he as real as any living loved one, and more precious than even wife or sweetheart? Can we say and really appreciate it,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

THE GREAT ARRAIGNMENT

Isaiah 1.

Here we see *corruption of the church* idealized and arraigned as fearlessly as Jesus' arraignment of the Pharisees.

To begin with, the ox and the ass possess more wisdom than God's people. These sinful people are laden with iniquity, they have forsaken the Lord, and despised the Holy One of Israel. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart." This means that the king and his priests are woe-fully bad. No soundness is to be found from head to foot; but wounds, bruises, and festering sores. The country is desolate, cities are destroyed by fire. Israel is become a Sodom and Gomorrah.

Why do you perform your externals before me, as sacrificing rams, bullocks and he-goats? I am sick of such, for your heart is not right toward me, saith the Lord. Quit bringing these oblations before me, and offering incense. I hate this external manipulation, for it is a soulless performance, mere formalism, churchianity. Clean up, put away your sins, cease to do evil, learn to do well, treat the oppressed and widows right. Become obedient, and your "sins tho they be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; tho they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The faithful city has become a harlot. She that was full of judgment and righteousness is now become a nest of murderers. Your companions are thieves; every one follows after graft; they judge not the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come before them. Therefore I will purge and destroy all the evil ones and restore righteousness.

This idealization of corruption is only equaled in the famous doom songs of the Bible. No greater arraignments of sin can be found in history, oratory, or secular literature, than in the Bible. The failure to mix religion with business and the secular affairs of life has ever brought the church to nought. It deserves the condemnation given it, for if religion fails to find issue in conduct, it ceases to be.

PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

Isaiah 5:1-7.

This bit of symbolic prophecy has for its organizing idea *ingratitude*, a return all out of keeping with what is given.

Says the prophet:

“My well-beloved had a vineyard
In a very fruitful hill;
And he made a trench about it,
And gathered out the stones thereof,
And planted it with the choicest vine,
And built a tower in the midst of it,
And also hewed out a winepress therein;
And he looked that it should bring forth grapes.”

We are told that it brought forth wild grapes. The owner declares that he has left nothing undone to make it bear good fruit.

Having done his best he tires, takes away the hedge and fence around the vineyard, and permits it to be eaten up and trodden down. He refuses to hoe or prune it, and lets it grow up in briars and thorns. He even commands the rains to fall no more upon it.

This parable text is a symbol of the house of Israel with the man of Judah as the pleasant plant. The vineyard is given every possible attention by the Lord and his prophets, but it brings forth no fruits of reverence, respect, mercy, love, faith or obedience, but instead oppression, wild grapes.

This is one of the sad bits of idealization in the Bible. God first makes man in his own image, puts him in the Garden of Eden, but he is not satisfied. Later he is put into a “fruitful hill,” a “land flowing with milk and honey.” He is given judges, kings, and prophets, and is ministered to in every way that is possible by a good Father, and yet he brings forth wild grapes, and causes the good God to annihilate him as a nation and even as a church.

We see a type of ingratitude here that calls up the un-

grateful monsters, Goneril, Regan, and Edmund in King Lear. The two daughters had everything for which to be thankful, having each been given half of the kingdom, yet they refused to keep their gray-haired father, turned him out in the storm, caused him to go crazy, and finally were the means of putting him and their own angel sister, Cordelia, to death. Edmund secured everything his father Gloucester had, title and all, then in turn he put his father's eyes out, and would have killed him if Edgar, his brother, had not interfered.

VISION TWO OF THE ISAIAHAN RHAPSODY

Isaiah 49.

The chief idea in this vision is the *ministry to the church*. This may be considered as pertaining to preachers or laymen. Rarely do we see a higher idealization of ministry or service.

Near the first there is a magnificent outburst of joy, a beautiful lyric:

"Sing, O heavens,
And be joyful O earth;
And break forth into singing, O mountains,
For the Lord hath comforted his people,
And will have compassion upon his afflicted."

This clearly indicates that our ministry to others should be joyous and helpful service. But even after this beautiful exhibition of heart and helpfulness we hear the church complaining:

"Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me."

In reply to this complaint we see the deepest love of Jehovah for his people.

"Can a mother forget her nursing child? Yea, others may forget, yet will not I. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

No one could mistake the great depths of devotion to his children made by Jehovah in these three pictures.

To find a parallel for such ministry we must go to the New Testament and see Jesus as a minister. He acts out his tender expressions of love. "I will be with you in six troubles, and in the seventh I will not forsake thee." "Lo, I will be with you always, even to the end of the age." Paul in his earnest, loving, helpful ministry at Ephesus, where he ceased not for three years to warn people day and night with tears, is another excellent parallel. The parsons set forth in *Canterbury Tales* and also in the *Deserted Village* are ideals of true service.

ZION, THE BRIDE OF JEHOVAH

Isaiah 54.

In the fifth vision of the *Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed*, the church is exalted as (1) *Jehovah's Bride*, (2) *The City of Beauty and Peace*, (3) *The Witness to the Nations*. Rarely has the church been so highly idealized.

Deepest devotion is the theme idealized in Zion the Bride of Jehovah. The bride has been in straits and has not prospered because of dereliction in duty, yet Jehovah says,

"Sing, O barren,
Thou that didst not bear,
Break forth into singing and cry aloud,
That thou didst not travail with child!

Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed,
Neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame;
For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
And the reproach of thy widowhood shalt thou remember no more.

For thy maker is thine husband;
The Lord of Hosts is his name;
And the Holy One of Israel is thy redeemer,
The God of the whole earth shall he be called."

Now as tenderly as any lover ever spoke to a sweetheart, so Jehovah speaks to his bride, promising with as great certainty as the rainbow sign that he will nevermore be wroth with her nor rebuke her.

“For a small moment have I forsaken thee;
But with great mercies will I gather thee;
In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.”

“For the mountains shall depart,
And the hills be removed,
But my kindness shall not depart from thee,
Neither shall my covenant of peace be removed.”

The language of devotion in the last stanza seems almost hyperbolic, but we must remember that God is an intense being, and means to carry conviction with his words.

The devotion idealized in this beautiful poem calls up the remarkable passage: “When my father and my mother forsake me the Lord will take me up.” Also Jesus’ many tender words of regard and genuine love for the church rush to the mind. Dearer to him is the church than is his life; he has proved this fact. Then his language so often shows it. We are further reminded of Revelation, where Jesus is the groom and the church is the bride. Surely God and Christ have done their best to get man to understand how dear the church is to them. The apperceptive bases used in their figures have been those which appeal most strongly to man’s nature.

In the Rime of the Ancient Mariner we see a devotion to the church somewhat akin to the above. Says the converted Mariner,

“Oh, sweeter than the marriage feast,
’Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company.”

The psalmist says, "I was glad when they said, let us go into the house of the Lord." The hymn, "There's a wideness in God's mercy," reveals a similar devotion. In Psalm 138 the devotion to the church is intense. The exiles in Babylon exclaim:

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

ZION THE CITY OF BEAUTY AND PEACE

Isaiah 54.

The theme is in the title. This is God's idea of what the church ought to be, and what it must become. If the Lord's prayer in John 17 were to be answered, the church would indeed become the city of beauty and peace.

The poem begins with the church storm-tossed in exile:

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
Behold, I will set thy stones in fair colors,
And lay thy foundations with sapphires.

And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies,
And thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy border of pleasant stones."

God employs terms which are intended to give us the highest appreciation of the church.

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;
And great shall be the peace of thy children:
In righteousness shalt thou be established.

Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear,
And from terror, for it shall not come near thee;
Behold, they may stir up strife, but not by me;
Whosoever shall stir up strife against thee shall fall because
of thee.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,
And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou
shalt condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,
And their righteousness which is of me, saith the Lord."

The church in this poem is conceived as a palace of precious stones. Its transcendent beauty and loveliness make it an object of almost heavenly contemplation. Then we see this palace of jewels given a guarantee of permanent peace. Such an idealization of the church is hard to find. Psalm 45 gives us a portrayal of the church external and internal, but the idealization is much lower as one can plainly see.

DOOM OF BABYLON

Isaiah 13:14-23, Jeremiah 50-51.

Retribution seems to be the organizing idea of this doom song. Babylon has hammered all nations, and now is hammered down herself.

First we see great Babylon in her glory and grandeur. She is the battle axe of God, the destroying mountain, the hammer of all the earth, the glory of kingdoms exalting herself above the stars of God, equal even to the Most High, a proud boaster indeed. She is called the beauty of the Chaldean Pride, the golden city, the day star, the sun of the morning. From a world point of view, could greater exaltation come to any kingdom?

Now watch her seeming heaven transform itself into a veritable hell. A voice of a multitude is heard among the mountains. The besom of destruction is sweeping down from the north. Fearful wrath and overpowering destruction are in the way. There is no light; the sun, the moon, the stars are darkened. Heaven and earth are trembling. Young men are dashed to pieces; children are not spared; women are ravished; men pierced thru with a sword, and babies dashed

to pieces. Utter destruction is on the great city. As it was with Sodom and Gomorrah, so here. Hell is moved to meet Babylon at her coming. The Shades of mighty kings rise up to ask if the great Hammer of all the earth is as weak as they.

The site of Babylon is left an utter ruin, inhabited by jackals, wolves, owls, and wild beasts. A curse is pronounced on the site that it should ever remain a desolation.

The idealization here is very high. In no other doom song of the Bible do we find such terror and awful wholesale destruction. Nor do we find Jesus' doom of the cities around Lake Galilee equal to it. It is a vivid verification of the fact that "the way of the transgressor is hard."

THE SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL VERSUS THE DIVINE SHEPHERD

Ezekiel 34.

In this scripture the prophet vividly sets forth the contrast between hirelings and real pastors.

Ezekiel begins by pronouncing a woe upon the hirelings. "Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the sheep?" These hirelings live fat, wear fine clothes, neglect the sick, comfort not the broken-hearted, do not go out after the lost, and rule with an iron hand. Having no real shepherd the sheep are scattered, devoured by the beasts of the field, and roam over all the earth. The Lord states plainly, "I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and cause them to cease feeding my sheep." The Lord declares that he will seek his people throughout the earth and will bring them into green pastures and by delightful water courses. He says, "I myself will feed my sheep and cause them to lie down. There shall be showers of blessing and they shall know that I am the Lord."

The carelessness and heartlessness of the hirelings that are idealized here, find a parallel in the Rhapsody of Zion

Redeemed, Vision 6, where the prophet arraigns the "sleepy, careless, snoring, dumb dogs," the priests of his people. John 10 is another parallel where the lazy shepherds permit the wolves to break into the fold. In both cases we see Jehovah and Jesus in mighty contrast as the tender, loving, careful shepherds of their people, each having a passionate fondness for his children.

The pastor has been idealized by many secular poets. Among them are Chaucer in *Canterbury Tales*, painting an almost faultless priest, and Goldsmith doing the same in the *Deserted Village*.

VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

Ezekiel 37.

This bit of idealization is remarkable, for it brings *life out of death*. We are raised from a repulsive scene of dead men's bones to an inspiring spectacle of activity. From one point of view we see *preaching* idealized; from another, the *power of God* exalted.

The house of Israel, Zion, has become a cemetery and worse, as many another church has become since. It is a valley of dry bones, very dry too. Bones, bones, bones, everywhere, no life, but death, death, a horrible sight! No one would ever think that there could be any hope here, but the Source of all Power tells Ezekiel to prophesy, to preach. "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." Immediately there is heard a clicking all over the valley as the bones begin to come together. As the life-giving preacher continues, the revival gets under greater and greater headway until finally we are told that even the earth is shaken, and the bones take on flesh and skin, life is breathed into them and they become a great army, showing that even yet Israel can come out of her grave of dead hopes, and have a great resurrection into vigorous life.

This bit of vision prophecy seizes the lowest possible and raises us out into the clear atmosphere of hope and life. The

only adequate parallel for this scene is where God alternates with the Celestial Chorus in Zion Redeemed in attempting to wake up Zion. For some time even God fails in his calls. Then the cry is taken up by the Celestial Chorus telling Zion that "the cup of her staggering is taken away." God comes on the scene again and calls and calls, reminding them once more of their former glories and of what he intends doing for them. At this the church awakens and begins singing:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him,
That bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

In secular literature one is reminded of the call of Tennyson and Browning to the nineteenth century to come out of the grave of materialism into the reviving atmosphere of faith and hope. The clarion calls of these two giant preachers brought about a real resurrection of the dead to a lively faith.

STORY OF THE FIERY FURNACE.

The theme of this well known story is *conviction*. This is a faith that *sticks*, a faith that keeps a man fixed.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has constructed a great image of gold on the plain of Dura. It is sixty cubits high and six cubits wide. A decree goes forth that at the sound of the musical instruments every one must fall down and worship the image. But the three Jewish officers refuse to fall down. This act of disobedience is reported to the king. He, in a rage, orders the men brought before him, and asks them how they dare to defy his authority. He tells them he will give them another opportunity and that the furnace will be heated seven times hotter than usual. "Now," says Nebuchadnezzar, "who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" This is a real defiance to God Almighty. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego calmly reply, "Be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor

worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Our God may deliver us from the flames, and again he may not; but our minds are fixed on God. Their convictions as to the right are stronger than such a frightful death.

Then the King becomes furious and orders mighty men to bind them and hurl them into the furnace. The urgency is so great that the flames leap out and consume the mighty men, but the fire only burns the bonds of the three Jews. The King is beside himself when he sees *four* men walking around in the flames unharmed. Calling them out he blesses their God, and issues a decree that it will be death to any one who utters a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He also promotes the three men.

The idealization here is about as high as it ever gets. It compares with that of Godlike Daniel when the hungry lions were ready to devour him; with the sublime faith of Stephen when falsely arraigned; with Abraham's trial on Mount Zion; with Luther, Latimer, and Ridley when tested to the uttermost; yet with even the Christ in Gethsemane and on Calvary. In all these cases greatest faith and profoundest convictions are needed. The incident of the apostles fleeing in time of danger stands out in painful contrast.

We give one stanza of a great hymn with which this story could be further compared:

"Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone;
Dare to have a purpose true,
Dare to make it known."

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

Daniel 6.

In this prophetic incident several things are highly idealized: *envy* on the part of the satraps, *faith and prayer* on the part of Daniel. The faith shown by Daniel is nothing short of the sublime.

Daniel from the first of his captivity has stood for God.

He refuses to eat the king's meat and drink his wine, and God honors him with preferment for it.

In the present case the one hundred and twenty satraps are simply envious of Daniel. This prophet shows a more excellent spirit than any of them, and Darius is now thinking of putting him over the entire Kingdom. This they cannot stand, therefore they determine to overthrow him. They look first for treason in him but find none. He is so faithful to every duty that they decide that the only way to trap him is by a scheme against his religious habits. Going to Darius these satraps, after flattering him, ask him to make the decree that any one who shall ask a petition of any other being than the king for thirty days shall be cast into the den of lions. The decree is made and signed. Grand old Daniel, so regular in prayer, loves his Lord better than he does his life; so three times a day in plain view before the open window on his knees, he talks to his Lord. The reprobrates are on the watch and report to the king. In the meantime the lions have been starved for several days to make them ravenous.

When Darius hears that his favorite has been caught, he is exceedingly sorry and casts about to save Daniel if possible; but these villains, Shylock-like, keep pressing on him the inexorability of the laws of the Medes and Persians. At sundown the old king yields, Daniel is cast into the den of lions, and Darius' seal is used to close the entrance. The king goes to his palace, fasts and tosses all night. Sleep is a stranger. Early in the morning he is up on the hillside lamentably calling his favorite: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" A voice comes from within: "O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O King, have I done no hurt." Then we are told that the king was exceeding glad and commanded that Daniel

should be taken out and his accusers thrown in. And the schemers did not reach the bottom of the cave until the starving, infuriated beasts had broken their bones and literally torn them to pieces. Such is the awful penalty for envy, treachery, double-dealing.

The idealization of envy, treachery, prayer, and faith is remarkable in this story. These little envious satraps could not brook a foreign superior. Therefore a treacherous scheme is planned which whirls them and *not* him into fearful destruction. This is usually the end of such sins, as we see in Macbeth, King Lear, Hamlet, Richard III, Marmion, Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr, and Judas Iscariot.

The faith exercised by Daniel is Godlike. Rather than be denied communion with his dear God, he deliberately chooses to die. Such love for prayer is hardly paralleled in the world. The faith shown is of the Abrahamic type. Joseph, Joshua, Gideon, Deborah, and the disciples after Pentecost, manifested a similar faith. In secular literature we catch glimpses of such faith in Emerson and Browning. They *never* wavered but marched breast forward.

NEW TESTAMENT

POETRY OF THE GOSPELS.

Most people are enraptured with secular poetry. They read it extensively, feast on its beauties, and become greater by its ideals. But they never dream that even brighter jewels and more inspiring ideals are to be found in the Bible. If people could only realize that the Bible has the best poetry in the world, the finest oratory, the most magnificent art galleries of portraits, the most philosophical of history, the best letters, the most entrancing stories, they would leave it for no other book. What other book finds man at his deepest, at his best? What other book touches man so extensively or so intensively? Nineteen centuries of world-intellect and world-interest have pronounced it the Book of books. This contention has been corroborated by ages of science, ages of literature, and ages of philosophy. Then, it is bathed in a beauty and a sublimity too, not possessed even by Dante's great strains, or Shakespeare's magnificent dramas. We cite as proof that greatest tragedy of the ages, the sublime life and death of Jesus Christ, as recorded especially in the Gospels. Here we have the actual Christ who is at the same time the ideal of all ideals—so far above any other mortal that there is no comparison. He lives his inspiring life on the earth, his words and deeds proclaiming to man, a God! a God! Yet he was man also. Next we see him in Gethsemane concerned even for his enemies to such an extent that it is impossible for man to get an adequate con-

ception of his passion. On Calvary he gives the world such an exhibition of love and self-sacrifice as to capture its very heart. This love first manifested on Calvary has since that time taken continents for righteousness. When we measure this great tragedy in the light of the world results which it has produced, we must say that any literary creation even of Shakespeare or Dante is to Jesus Christ as a candle is to the sun in the heavens. Jesus is not a literary creation, but an actuality, God's own creation.

As a further proof of our contention, we may cite the sublime rhapsody of Zion Redeemed in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, where God establishes the fact that he will one day realize himself in the earth. Again, in our own estimation some of the wonderful doom songs of the Bible excel the grandeur even of any of Shakespeare's poems. If one will adequately picture to himself the awful doom of Babylon as set forth by Isaiah and Jeremiah, he will be impressed as he is by no secular poem.

The real purpose of this chapter is to give a brief introduction to the poetic splendors of that part of the Bible which is not even considered poetical, *i. e.*, the Gospels. Many concede there are hundreds of beautiful and inspiring lyrics and scores of magnificent odes in the Old Testament. They grant, too, that we may find elegies, idyls, doom songs, rhapsodies, orations, and the dramatic in abundance in the old part of the Bible; but they at least seem to deny that the New Testament has any of these bright jewels. They may think it strange to speak of the poetry of the Gospels, for they consider them but "the authoritative statements of the acts and words of Jesus Christ," and therefore prose, mere biography. We may grant that the Gospels in the main are prose in form, but we affirm that they are poetic in content. This we shall attempt to show by examining the nature of poetry.

I. NATURE OF POETRY.

1. *Poetry Deals with the Essential and Abiding in Hu-*

man Life.—Nothing short of that which is of universal interest can find a place in a poem. The great poetic themes of immortality, love, trust in Providence, hope, regret, living under the inspiration of the highest, and many others of world interest which have caused giant struggles in the hearts of such men as Tennyson, Longfellow, Lowell, Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Bryant, Whittier, and Browning, are treated in the Gospels with the delicate touch of a true poet. All of these themes except regret find their best setting forth, their highest idealization in the real life of Jesus. We shall also see some of them typified in other poems of the Gospels. As to regret, it and even remorse find a setting in Judas Iscariot which more than parallels *The Raven*. In this most noted of Poe's poems idealization is not so extensive as it is with Judas Iscariot. Poe is in a tremendous struggle over "a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore." Just what caused his struggle is shrouded in the mists, but he seems to have done something that has pronounced the doom upon him, the doom of never having removed from out his heart the beak of the raven, the symbol of remorse. And still further, he is "nevermore" to see in this world or the next this "rare and radiant maiden;" but he does not commit suicide. In Judas we see a preacher chosen by Christ himself, a healer of diseases, a proclaimer of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, a trusted and, no doubt, at first efficient treasurer of the church. We watch greed and ambition gnawing at his heart until he falls so low as to extinguish the Light of the world. Nothing is too good to stand in the way of his advancement. Money and worldly advancement, he will have. But when he sees the enormity of his crime, regret and remorse so seize upon him as to throw him at once into the vortex of self-destruction. When we swing into this picture the world consequences of the deed, what secular poem can parallel it?

2. *Poetry Searches the Human Heart as Does Nothing Else*.—Do you doubt that the Gospels do this? They sweep

the whole gamut of the human emotions. They sink the soul to the depths even of the unpardonable sin and lift it to the heights of universal charity and heavenly beauty. This latter idea is clearly seen in the beautiful life of Christ. The Gospels also touch man in all points necessary to complete self-realization. The ideal pointed out is all-sufficient, it being the ideal of ideals—the only complete exemplification of the three great universal worths, truth, beauty, and virtue. Whatever is true, whatever is beautiful, whatever is good we find touched upon in this matchless life—Jesus Christ.

3. *Poetry Sets Forth the Ideal.*—It reveals the better things of life, the better self, the possibilities within us. Christ lived such an ideal life. In fact, his life was in itself a poem, and it is greater to be a poem than to write one. In it we find the truest types of friendship, universal charity, pure love, aspiration, and other poetical themes.

4. *Poetry Makes You Feel the Truth.*—We read an ethical treatment of love and are unmoved, but we read Miles Standish and we fall in love. We read *The Merchant of Venice* and are swept on by an irresistible current; yet the Gospels furnish us the best poem on love and are sweeping the world into its vortex. Really read the Gospels, especially John's, and you will fall in love with the Christ. You are drawn irresistibly to him, such is the marvelous power of poetry. Read *Sir Launfal* and you feel your soul expanding toward others; but read the Gospels and really imbibe their spirit and you feel a love in your soul for all mankind. Our own hearts tend to sweep out into the dimensions of the Christ-heart.

We read a poem on kindness and really feel kind for a time; but the inimitable kindness of Jesus to his disciples, and even to the publicans, draws us strongly to him. Kindness takes on a heavenly lustre in his actions.

5. *Poetry is the Language of the Human Heart Trying to Express the Sublime and Beautiful Found in It.*—It is the language of aspiration to the true and great, and reveals a

kind of divine radiance. It is the mortal breathing out immortality. It is the soul telling of world joys, world sorrows. It consists of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." It is the true language of emotion and imagination.

All these qualities are clearly exemplified in the Gospels, yet I hear some one saying that they do not have the music and metre which we find in other poetry. No, I grant it, but neither has Shakespeare. If he had to meet such a test he too would be ruled out. We find rhythm though, and it is certain that sound is not greater than sense. This, Shakespeare and the Bible writers well knew. While the metre is absent, you do find universal interests set forth in such a charming manner as ever to be attractive. You find a searching of the human heart paralleled nowhere else in literature. You find the ideal so presented as to make you very sensitive to it. You find the beautiful and sublime clothed in a dress equal in splendor to themselves.

Why is most of the Bible written in poetry? Because it is the natural language for the sublime and beautiful in life. The theme of eternal life is the very acme of sublimity and beauty. Only song, poetry, eloquence, and story could adequately set forth the divine light of religion. What a hold these means have on man! So long as people delight in hymns of praise, and the gemmed thoughts of the old Book, our civilization will have high ideals. Nothing so affects people when they stop long enough in their mad rush to listen to these numbers. Poetry, that divinest of arts, is indeed the greatest helpmeet of religion; for it is the most natural avenue for truth which is the vital element of Christianity. It is certainly true that religion without poetry and song could never have transformed humanity.

To one who delights to think with the gods, as it were, who finds joy in the third heaven of the imagination, who falls down in reverence before the great truth, beauty and virtue portrayed in the Bible, the divine Book is a golden offering of heaven. Nothing short of poetry seems adequate to set

forth such themes as immortality, salvation, love, mercy, tenderness, kindness, courage, and fortitude. These and many others of great significance to the human heart are set forth in such a charming way as to captivate the beauty-loving soul.

Have you ever stopped to think of it? Materialism can have no poetry, for it has no soul. No genius can believe it, let alone beautify it in song and verse. Its only music is the jingle of money and the rattle of machinery. It is, as one has well said, "the evolution of mind into man and dirt into deity." It is as incapable of poetic treatment as it is of scientific proof.

II. GOSPELS VIEWED—

1. *In Their Entirety as a Great Tragedy.*
2. *As Made Up of Many Poems.*

The Gospels as a whole are a great tragedy, greater than Edipus Tyrannus, greater than Hamlet or any other literature, for we are plunged lower and raised higher than in any other tragedy. They dramatically set forth the ideal life of Jesus. His life was in reality a poem, for his thoughts, his words, and his deeds were all ideal. In the Gospels we see him struggling as to the real nature of his Messiahship, and also as to the way of carrying it out, for he was man. In this struggle the two most tragic scenes are the Temptation in the Wilderness and Dark Gethsemane. So great is Christ's struggle in the first, he forgets for forty days to feed himself. Although tempted in the three most vulnerable points known to man, he triumphs over all and decides once for all as to the spiritual nature of his Messiahship. In Gethsemane we see a struggle as to how the Messiahship shall further be carried out. He sweats, as it were, great drops of blood. The struggle is unparalleled in history. From the sloughs of temptation and uncertainty he is lifted to complete divine insight as to the power, wisdom, and purpose of God. Of course, the ideal to him is always God, his Father. Christ seeks to do only the will of the Father and in so doing there

is given us a series of poetic scenes unparalleled in literature. The series ends with the darkest scene earth ever witnessed or pen ever painted, darker from one standpoint than the end of Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, or King Lear. We certainly see the awful cost of sin in a clearer light than we do in any secular drama. The natural and supernatural in this and the Trial Scene far excel any witch-or-demon-enlivened scene of Shakespeare. In fact, there is scarcely any comparison, for one is on the plane of man, while the other is on the plane of God.

At last we see a God-man dying, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust. Men there as a rule did not sympathize with him, but the earth shook as a strong man overcome with grief. Even the great sun refused to look upon the scene. In the midst of icy-cold hate, love cries out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Just at the very last we hear the victor cry out with gladsome, triumphant shout, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," revealing the power to lay down his life.

We search in vain to find such a poem elsewhere in literature, one so brilliant in putting, of such eternal importance. It is not only of universal, but of everlasting value. No poem sinks us so deep or raises us so high as do the Gospels taken as a whole. In them we are plunged to the depths of the unpardonable sin and lifted to the heights of complete spiritual freedom.

Let us now, in both secular literature and the Gospels, institute a comparison between poems having the same theme.

In the Ode to a Waterfowl, we find the ideal of perfect trust in Providence. Here we see William Cullen Bryant, a lonely lawyer, going to a Connecticut town to wait for clients and starve! He doubts Providence and pitches off into the "Slough of Despond," his mind being lined with black. He sees a duck flying exposed to the fowling pieces and stormy weather. Weary, yet it turns neither to right nor left, but keeps on towards its goal to be with its fellows. It is un-

moved by "the cold thin atmosphere," night coming on, long weariness, the "solitary way," "the desert and illimitable air," and the fowling pieces. In this bird trusting God by instinct, Bryant finds his ideal, which was ever afterwards a beacon light of inspiration to him.

"He who from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright."

This poem the world does not cease to admire, but we find a more brilliant putting of the same theme in the Shepherd Scene of the Gospels, where both heaven and earth are called in to heighten the scene. The shepherds have been long waiting for the Messiah and doubting—Will he come? Will he come? Suddenly an angel appears over the Judean hills and a heavenly radiance above the brilliancy of the moon and stars shines around about them. Then a great radiance, a regular overflow meeting from heaven. They are singing the greatest of oratorios, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men: unto you this day in Bethlehem is a Saviour born." From doubt the shepherds are raised up to the highest trust. They hasten immediately to Bethlehem to find Jesus, and after worshipping him they return, rejoicing and praising God. Even Shakespeare and the ancient Grecian poets with their witches and weird imagery are pale lights compared with the heavenly imagery found in the Gospels.

Longfellow in his *Excelsior* has given us the ideal of living under the inspiration of the highest. We see a youth full of spirit, climbing a mountain. Around him is the pelt-ing storm and darkness, and above him the pitching avalanches. Not even the maiden's smile, nor the gleaming household fires, nor the call of the old man, warning him of the lowering tempests, can stay him. On he presses at duty's

call, and morning's dawn finds him grasping in his death-cold hand that banner with the strange device, "Excelsior."

"There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell like a falling star,
Excelsior."

"Beautiful," you say. Yes, but Jesus, struggling for three years up Mount Calvary and finally dying for principle amidst the jeerings of a hate-cursed people and the convulsions of both earth and sun, is more beautiful. Better still, it is more grandly sublime. Language cannot paint the fury of the storm that raged around him, nor the allurements to draw him away from the path of duty. The devil alone offered him a thousand-fold more temptation than was placed in the youth's way.

If it were necessary we might show a parallel for Excelsior in the scene at the Feast of Purim, where Jesus on the Sabbath day heals the impotent man. A more vivid scene is his sermon on the Bread of Life in the Capernaum synagogue on the next day after feeding the five thousand. In both cases he is in danger of losing his life and in the latter case of losing his friends, yes, even his own disciples. "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"—perhaps the most pathetic utterance in all literature.

The world is enraptured with the ideal of universal charity set forth in *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. In the bright morn of life a gallant knight starts out to seek for the Holy Grail. Proud and haughty, he tosses the leper a piece of gold; but with such a heart he meets only failure. In the chill winter evening of life he realizes that the only road to greatness is the road to service. Driven, as it were, from his castle, his earldom taken away from him, the cold wintry winds all night long making a harp out of his gray locks, he is brought

to complete dependence. Despite the warring of the elements against him, his heart is filled with love for even the loathsome leper whom he now sees before him.

"I behold in thee

An image of Him who died on the tree."

Sir Launfal breaks the ice and gives the leper drink and also divides the last crust with him. He at last finds that the object of his search, the Holy Grail, is in his own heart. No more is his castle cold and closed to people around, but its gates stand wide open to every man in the whole "north countree."

This vision so entranced Lowell while writing it that for forty-eight hours he took no food nor did he sleep. In comparison, notice in the Gospels we have a continuous manifestation of universal charity in the ministerial labors of Jesus. There are swept into this latter picture all his deeds of healing, kindness, love, and some of the most tragic scenes known in literature. We see him at the Pool of Bethesda healing an invalid who has a malady of thirty-eight years' standing. Finding a woman who has been for eighteen years bent over upon herself, he gives her sweet release in health and an upright position. Another poor woman who for twelve years has been diseased and has spent all of her money with the doctors, finds the thrill of life in her body by a mere touch of the hem of his garment. The blind, the deaf, and the dumb are given sight, hearing, and speech by his life-giving touch. Meeting a widow one day following the staff of her support to his grave Christ stops the procession and restores the son to his overjoyed mother. Jairus is thrown into ecstasies of delight by having his twelve-year-old daughter restored to him. And the joy of Martha and Mary knows no bounds when their brother is given back to them. We also see Jesus helping those even lower than the leper. On various occasions those who have fallen into the depths of social impurity, than which there is nothing lower, are blessed with

forgiveness and joy in their hearts. The great love of Christ goes out in tender sympathy to all, regardless of their standing. The thoughts and sympathies of Jesus are ever universal, and yet the examples of universal charity just given, pale very much when we compare them with that flow of universal love which produced Gethsemane, the Trial Scene, and Calvary. Can these images picturing the universal love of Jesus be paralleled in literature? What eternal consequences hang on some of them!

The ideal of living by dying, as set forth in *Thanatopsis*, immortalized Bryant when he was but nineteen. The same theme, found in the life of Christ, is in a coloring much more significant to the world. He is continually laying down his very life for the good of those about him. Finally we see him actually giving his life for man—so great is his love for humanity. In so doing he received it back in the largeness and fullness that is filling the earth with heavenly joy and comfort.

Love, the theme of most poets, is given a setting in John's Gospel which has caused the world to fall in love with Christ. This Gospel seems to have been written in heaven by the loving Christ, so unearth-like and so heavenly does it seem.

Other pictures of love may be mentioned in connection with the life of Jesus. What is more beautiful in literature than the picture of love presented in the parable of the Lost Sheep, where the shepherd goes forth that stormy night among the jagged rocky mountains to find his lost sheep?

"Out on the mountains he heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die."

Evangeline sought Gabriel, for she loved him and him only. He sought her for the same reason. In the poem of the Lost Sheep, Christ seeks any lost soul. His love is deeper, broader, and fuller, for it is universal and divine.

Among the poems whose theme is love, can you find a

parallel to The Prodigal Son? The degree of idealization here is wonderful. The boy goes as low as the lowest, even spending a part of his father's living with harlots. Out of money and friends, a castaway feeding swine, famishing and heartsick, he says, "I will arise and go to my father," willing now to become "as a hired servant." The father seeing him "afar off" runs to meet him and, throwing his arms about his neck, covers his face with kisses. The poor penitent boy tries to tell his father how bad he has been, but the father appears hardly to listen. At once he orders a ring to put on his finger, shoes on his feet, the best robe put on him, the fatted calf killed, and all to make merry over the return of the lost one. From the lowest of the low, he is raised to the highest of the high. A more thrilling picture of love is nowhere to be found. It mirrors the whole of the gospel of love. For more can be read into it than one can see in the beautiful stories of the repentance of Sir Launfal, Guinevere, The Ancient Mariner, or Leontes.

Immortality, the theme on which Tennyson struggled so hard in his *In Memoriam* and *Two Voices*, Wordsworth in his *Ode on Immortality*, and Longfellow in his *Psalm of Life*, is everywhere taken for granted in the Gospels. We read these and are made to feel eternal. No other poem does this to such an extent. By almost unseen touches the soul mounts farther up the heights than it does in *In Memoriam*, or *Psalm of Life*, where the authors seem to have had almost a life-and-death struggle over the question.

Is the world-renowned picture of friendship, as painted by that prince of poets, Shakespeare, in *The Merchant of Venice*, more beautiful than the one portrayed in the Gospels? Christ in his friendship fills out the true definition of a friend—another yourself. Antonio was willing to die for his friend Bassanio, but Christ actually did die not only for his friends, but his enemies.

Good people have loved that beautiful poem, *Nauhaught the Deacon*, ever since Whittier wrote it. The wife and

children of the old Indian Deacon are sick and in need. He, doubting Providence, goes gloomily to his traps, but finding nothing in them, he returns heartsick to his home. In the underbrush he finds a pocketbook with ten shining pieces of gold in it. He dreamed last night of finding gold. He will keep it, for it will help him out of need. Religion has not paid much anyway. Such thoughts came to him, but suddenly something said, "Nauhaught, be a man!" This decides the case. He goes up to the boat, gives over the pocketbook, receives one gold piece for his honesty and goes singing homeward. He is raised to the pinnacle of perfect trust. Says he:

"My neighbors saw the skipper,
But I saw the angel."

In the Temptation of Christ we see him struggling as to the way of carrying out his Messiahship, for as we have said, he was a man. He is in agony and for forty days he forgets his body, so great is the strain. Think of it, a God-man suffering so! He is tempted in the three most vulnerable points known to the heart of man and yet here, as throughout the Gospels, we see him triumphing over every temptation. In the Gospel picture the future weal or woe of the nations of the earth comes in, making it transcendently more picturesque than Whittier's ideal.

We mention but one more of these poetic scenes of the Gospels, and that is the Transfiguration. Here we have heaven called in again to heighten the scene. One purpose of Jesus is to lift the disciples from their earthly bondage as to the nature of his Messiahship to its true spiritual nature. Christ's face, as he is praying, shines like the sun in the heavens and his garments are as white as light. Two heavenly messengers come and talk with him about his near supreme sacrifice. Peter is beside himself and talks strangely. A bright cloud overshadows them and God Almighty himself is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased; hear ye him." But not even this, perhaps the most spectacular scene in the Bible, relieves the disciples of their bondage. A Pentecost is necessary for this.

Viewed from one standpoint, consecration is a theme of this poem. Jesus could go to heaven as Elijah went, but he chooses to go the Gethsemane road, for he is entirely consecrated to the divine will. It is not so with the disciples, for they seem to prefer earthly honor rather than heavenly. From another point of view, this poem is the most spectacular presentation of the pre-eminence of Christ to be found in the Bible. The imagery is not excelled even by Sinai's Mountain or John on the Isle of Patmos. Christ's face, shining like the face of the sun in the Shekinah light, and two heavenly messengers appearing on the scene, are enough to overcome the disciples. Moses, dead fourteen hundred years, comes and seems to lay down the law at the feet of Jesus. Elijah, dead nine hundred years, seems to lay down prophecy in the same place. To raise the scene to the highest, God himself speaks out of the heavens and gives all preference to his Son in the glorious words, "Hear ye him."

To parallel this poem, either in the richness of its theme or the splendor of its imagery, we have searched in vain in secular literature. The poem seems to stand alone in its grandeur and sublimity of conception.

Not only do we find the Gospels filled with unique poems but also very poetic passages. Note the beauty in the following, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good will toward men." These are merely specimen jewels of this book of eternal setting.

Thus, whether we examine the Gospels in their single passages, in their larger wholes, or as constituting a single whole, we find them the very acme of poetry.

How fitting that the Bible, which is the inspiration of all poetry, should have been given in the main in poetry. Thirty out of its forty authors were poets. The religion of which the Bible is the basis had for its fitting harbinger the song of the morning stars and the sons of God. No wonder the monarch minstrel and prophets of song could sing so sweetly on the holy hills of Zion. We are not surprised that its Messiah was heralded to earth by a hallelujah chorus of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men." It is not strange that such a divine religion has been sung in the poetry of every tongue in the world, and has filled the universe with light and sweetness. And finally shall the poets, singers, and beauty-loving souls of the ages make heaven's dome resound with the glad notes of redemption's song.

Great Book! The brightest jewel of earth and sweetest gift of heaven. Let us look into this palace of diamond-set truths and enjoy some of heaven here and secure an assurance that eternity shall be filled with glory.

PREFACE TO JOHN'S GOSPEL

The *incarnation* is the thought idealized in John's preface. It rises into grandeur and even into sublimity.

The story of the incarnation begins as does the marvelous poem of creation, on the mountain tops of sublimity.

"In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God."

At once we are plunged beyond all human realms of thought, for the mind cannot conceive of the ultimate beginning. We cannot even say that it was when God began world-building, for Christ must have existed prior to that time.

A word is a sign of an idea; therefore the Word referred

to, is the meaning of God—Christ is the meaning of God, or he is God manifest in the flesh.

Then we are told that thru Christ everything in the universe was made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. "And the light shineth into the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." This is certainly true of the Jews, but not of the Gentiles, for they are in a measure comprehending this light which came to earth to chase away its shadows.

The story of Jesus coming to the earth which he had made, and not being received by his own people, is one of the saddest of literature. "He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

The incarnation is unique. It impresses one with the sublimity of the God-movement and the littleness of the man-movement. We see the divine ongoing in creation and the mysterious incarnation. Christ ever moves as a God, while man seems not able to comprehend him and dispel the darkness that has gathered around him.

MAGNIFICAT

Luke 1:46-55.

This beautiful lyric immediately follows the Ave Maria. Mary has gone into the hill country to visit Elizabeth. In reply to her cousin's greeting, Mary breaks forth into a divine strain:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his hand maiden,
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me
blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done unto me great things; and
holy is his name,

And his mercy is unto generations and generations of them
that fear him.

He hath shown strength with his arms;

He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their
heart.

He hath put down princes from their thrones,

And hath exalted them of low degree.

The hungry he hath filled with good things;

And the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath helped Israel his servant, that he might remember
mercy

(As he spake unto our father) toward Abraham and his seed
forever."

Nothing but inspiration could have produced such a *sublime magnifying of the Lord*. It reminds one of the grand strains of the psalmist or the old prophets.

SHEPHERD SCENE

Luke 2:8-21.

This is one of the prettiest, one of the most picturesque of all Biblical poems. It has a scenic splendor akin to Sinai's mountain, the Apocalyptic visions, or Transfiguration Mountain. The theme is *trust*.

The shepherds are tending their flocks on the Judean hills. For many years they have been hoping and expecting a star to arise in the East. Suddenly their hope is realized. An angel, too, begins to sing above them and presently a whole chorus of angels singing the grandest oratorio ever heard by man. "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men. For unto you this day is born a Savior in Bethlehem who is Christ the Lord."

The shekinah light, the angelic voices, and realized expectation, inspire the shepherds to the highest faith. They immediately start in the direction of the Star and are guided by it to Bethlehem, where they find the babe lying in a

manger. They tell Mary that an angel has told them that the babe is the Savior of the world, Christ the Lord. Then they return praising God and glorifying his holy name for the wonderful revelation to them. Mary ponders these things in her heart, wondering what they can mean.

This poem may be compared with Crossing the Bar. Ten-nyson in the evening of life is sweetly trusting in God.

“Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call to me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.”

“And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
For tho’ from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.”

REALITY vs. APPEARANCE

Matthew 3:7-13.

This theme is strikingly set forth in the brief bit of scripture cited. *Self-righteousness* may be another theme for it.

John takes us from “viper” men to the spirit-filled and spirit-thrilled life of the consecrated Christian.

The great Forerunner seeing the hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, calls them by their right name: “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” The preacher is absolutely fearless. The sham and pretense in the life of these legalists, Pharisees, are so repulsive to this man of God that he shows them publicly just exactly where they stand. Continuing, John says, “Bring forth fruit meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise

up Children unto Abraham"; in other words, if you have come to my baptism, you must show that you are repentant, bring forth fruits meet for repentance, show by your conduct, your life, that you are in earnest. Do not think for once that you can hide behind the boast of being Children of Abraham. A towering personality, a very God-Christ, is now on the earth compared with whom I am nothing, nor is my baptism to be compared with his. I baptize you only with water unto repentance, but "he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire." He will produce a real divine change making you "a new creature," and enabling you to say, "for me to live is Christ." There will be real cleansing when he does his work. Nothing but reality will stand with him.

This theme of reality versus appearance finds an extensive treatment throughout the gospels. The make-believe religious life of the Jewish Church, especially in its ruling classes, illustrates appearance. We are reminded, too, of the same theme so admirably treated in the Uncrowned King.

TEMPTATION

Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13.

The inspiration of an ideal is the theme of this noted bit of scripture. Jesus, tho a man, ever acts as in the immediate presence of the Infinite. His faith is God-like and through such great trust he gains the victory.

The Holy Spirit has just descended upon him without measure, and with it the fullness of his Messianic consciousness. Being a man, a Jew, he is tempted. What shall be the nature of his Messiahship? Shall it be spiritual or not? So great is his absorption in the question, he seeks the solitude of the Wilderness, and forgets his body for forty days and nights. He is tempted at the end of this time to use his power in miraculously relieving his intense hunger by making bread of stones, but even in an agony of hunger he still prefers the word of God, spiritual food, to physical food. Under such trying conditions, to hear him say, "Man shall not live by

bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," is sublime. Such appreciation of the word of God by his followers, would shortly make the world a paradise.

Next the tempter candies the hook of temptation all over with display of power, so palatable to nearly all men. The tempter, too, has learned to quote the scriptures on Christ, but Jesus hurling the scriptures back at him thwarts him again.

Finally the supreme test to a Jew or any other man is given, money or world dominion. Just fall down and worship me and I will give thee all the world. With not a moment's hesitation Jesus replies, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Then we are told that "angels came and ministered to him."

It is clear that God is ever first in Jesus' mind. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God;" this is what Jesus always does. And he says to us, "I am the way." Are we at all times striving to realize his high ideals?

In the third temptation a thousand-fold more allurement is offered to Christ than appears in the noted poem, *Excelsior*. The great God-man is ever living under the inspiration of the highest. The tempter may become an "angel of light" and bait his hook with more than ever caught Eve or any other person; but Christ's matchless insight and faith keep him always on the royal road of the Divine.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5-7, Luke 6.

The theme of this most famous of all sermons is *ideal living*. The discourse is really a fine bit of literature setting forth the qualities of an ideal man.

The typical man painted for us by the Christ is a cross to the then-known world. He is poor in spirit, meek, hungers and thirsts after righteousness, is merciful, pure in heart, is a

peace-maker, and takes it Desdemona-like when he is persecuted for righteousness' sake. He is pictured as the salt of the earth, a preserver and purifier. The figure then is immediately changed to the light of the world. The ideal man is made as a light in the heavens, a city set on a hill.

Jesus is a keen analyst. He shows to his ideal man that to look on a woman to lust after her is adultery, and also that there is but one ground of divorce and that is fornication. He leaves no loopholes; one's thoughts and actions must both be right. Jesus' ideal man is exhorted to suffer wrongs, not an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but an exhortation to turn the other cheek. This may displease the pugnacious who expect to fight their way into the land of pure delight. God's ideal man must love his enemies, bless them who persecute him, and do good to such. If he does good only to those who do him good, he is no better than the publicans and sinners are.

The Christ type of man never parades his alms before men. Unlike the hypocrites who sound a trumpet in the street to be seen of men, Jesus' ideal man does not let his right hand know what his left hand does. The parading method misses the divine blessing. The divine type of man has the same idea in regard to prayer. He does not pray on the street corners to be seen of men; this is piosity: real piety moves the ideal man. He enters into his closet, shuts the door, prays to his Father in secret, and his Father who seeth in secret rewards him openly.

The same law of lack of parade characterizes fasting. To man, Jesus' ideal type of man does not appear to fast, but only to God. When he fasts he anoints his head with oil and washes his face. All disfigurement of face and sadness of countenance are removed.

Jesus' ideal man has a correct valuation of things; he makes first things first. He lays up treasures in heaven rather than on the earth. His eye is single, and not double; he does not use a double-barreled gun with the load in the wrong

barrel. Changing the figure as the Bible is so prone to do, the ideal man knows he cannot consistently serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. God and mammon come together about like the north poles of two magnets; still their being forced together has caused demagnetization of myriads of people.

Knowing the interest men would have in worldly things, Jesus exhorts his ideal man not to be over anxious concerning worldly things such as food, clothing, and shelter. By a beautiful illustration which shows that the lilies, which take no thought, are arrayed more splendidly than even Solomon in all his glory, Jesus convinces his ideal man that he will take care of him, will lead him into green pastures and by still waters.

Rash judging is forbidden to the ideal man; it will always, like a boomerang, return upon its sender. If one first casts the saw-logs out of his own eye, he then can see clearly to pick the little chunk out of his brother's eye. The only law of judging allowed is, "by their fruits ye shall know them." By this law false prophets can easily be told. Men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor vice versa.

Pretense is an offense to Jesus' ideal man. Action is the test of this man's faith. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who art in heaven." Pretense and talk will never pave the way to ideal life.

Finally the Christ type of man builds on the solid rock Christ Jesus, and not the shifting sands of time. The winds may come, the floods rage and dash furiously against the house on the rock, but it stands; while the same elements sweep the house on the sands to destruction.

In this bit of idealization, Jesus has given the world a type of man who adorns heaven here below and will one day beautify the heavens above. In the totality of ideal qualities

no type in secular literature can be cited for comparison. No mere man is competent to paint an ideal equal to Jesus' typical man.

CONSIDER THE LILIES

Matthew 6:28-34, Luke 12:27-34.

This poem, in both form and content, is considered one of the gems of the New Testament. Its theme is *God's protecting care or God's providence*.

Jesus passes from the fearing, worrying, worldly minded men who are ever concerned about this world's goods, to the trusting, tranquil, spiritually minded Christian who knows that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

Says Jesus, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Even tho the lilies do nothing, they are more beautifully arrayed than Solomon in all his glory. The comparison is striking and very suggestive. The same may be said of the comparison between the grass of the field and his care for his children.

Jesus further tells us not to be concerned about the morrow as to what we shall eat, drink, or wear; for says he, "after all these things do the Gentiles seek." He would not have his people like the Gentiles. The first concern of these worldly people is this world's goods, but the peculiar people of God should have as their first interest spiritual things. Continues Jesus, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." It is as clear as daylight that the Christian's first duty is toward the kingdom of God. Any man who believes Jesus' own word must hold to this. Jesus gives in this connection

a further reason for this view. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It could not be otherwise. Therefore Jesus would have the treasure spiritual. He assures his children as does the psalmist that he is our shepherd and that we shall not want, and that we shall lie down in green pastures and be led by the side of still waters, so to speak. He gives perfect assurance that the heavenly Father is not unmindful of things that we need, and that he will provide them. No one in touch with the matchless activity of the Infinite, doubts this for a moment. In tune with the Divine means in tune with activity.

Psalm 23 is most like this poem in theme and treatment. Jesus' idealization is perhaps more appealing. One is also reminded of the providence that guided the Waterfowl of Bryant, and also Browning's Guardian Angel. We are further reminded of Jesus's saying in regard to sparrows. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE * * *

John 3:16.

Like some of Browning's poems this is a colossal little poem. It is even one of God's biggest least poems, and so clearly shows love's nature to give.

It is God's golden message to the world, comprehending the sum-total of sixteen hundred years of love revelation. It tells of a love that loves, a love that serves, a love that sacrifices. In it we see the father-heart of God, the mother-heart of Christ, yes, the friend-heart of the world's truest Friend. Here we are swept out into the universal, beholding a world-lover, a world-man, a world-thinker, a world-sympathizer, a non-respecter of persons, one whose mind and heart reach across races, recognizing no distinctions, no political lines, no social distinctions. Jesus is a genuine

helper, a universal helper, not narrowed down to a little clan. It is a great God and a great Christ set forth in this renowned poem.

The idealization in this poem is divinely beautiful and great. God gives his best and only, to die for the worst. No higher measure of love can be found. We are reminded of Gethsemane and Calvary; also of the hymn:

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind.
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.”

Two other comparisons may be given.

1. “Thy commandment is *exceeding broad*.”
2. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

CENTURION’S SERVANT HEALED

Matthew 8:5-13.

Faith receives one of its very highest idealizations in this scripture.

A centurion’s servant is at death’s door. The officer, who loves the Jews and had built them a synagogue, sends the elders to Jesus to beseech him to come and heal his servant. When Jesus is nearing the centurion’s house, the officer sends Him word that he is unworthy to have Him come into his house. “Only speak the word and my servant shall be healed.” Jesus marveled at such faith, saying, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” This, being a Gentile, seems

to astonish Jesus, for faith so great could hardly be expected from a heathen.

This compares in idealization with the touch of His garment, and the look at the Brazen Serpent. Very few cases are worthy to be compared with this.

Any one may learn from this that if he is ever to be at peace with his God, he must take Him at his word,—“His word is life, is spirit.” If it is believed and acted upon it is life-giving.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN

Luke 7:11-17.

Jesus' compassion is the one absorbing idea in the story. One of the most characteristic features of Jesus' life is here clearly portrayed.

A poor widow, grief-stricken, weeping bitterly, is following the staff of her support, her only son, to the cemetery. Jesus, meeting the procession, is touched by the spectacle. He sees the widow weeping and determines to help her. His first words are: “Weep not.” He stops the procession, touches the bier, and says, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise.” Imagine the joy of that weeping widow when the boy springs up and throws his arms of love about his dear mother's neck. No language can paint the emotions surging in that poor woman's soul.

The effect on all was wonderful. “Fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, a great prophet is risen among us, and God hath visited his people.”

In this idealization we have the direst need relieved thru the compassionate love of the World-Sympathizer. Other cases at once arise to mind, such as Jairus' daughter, raising of Lazarus, feeding of five thousand, and also the four thousand, and Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, but comparisons in secular literature can nowhere be found.

TREASURE IN A FIELD.—PEARL OF
GREAT PRICE

This brief but notable poem gives the *highest valuation of salvation*. This is Jesus' own value, and it is therefore sure that salvation can not be had short of the purchase price.

Jesus in speaking to the people says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth *all* that he hath, and buyeth that field." When the man *sees* the treasure, he is willing to give all he has for it.

Jesus re-enforces the same idea by a similar parable. Says he, "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found *one* pearl of great price, went and sold *all* he had, and bought it."

According to Jesus, salvation costs nothing short of all. It means complete surrender, a giving up of all to the divine. Jesus requires of man just what he himself has given; he gave all and therefore demands all in return. Anything short of this could not meet the divine purpose. God asks that our wills be completely lost in his; otherwise the Divine and human could not be one. It is clear that in parable the whole heart is in the enterprise. "Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also." We see too an earnest seeking for the "treasure and pearl." Things of great value demand just such earnest search.

The value of salvation is very highly idealized, for one could not give more than all. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner may be compared with this poem. The Mariner gives up all to get out of his thralldom into the free atmosphere of salvation. Jesus places, too, a very high value on salvation, comparing it with the whole world. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" But the highest value of salvation is found on the God side when we see the Divine Being actually giving

up his only Son for man's sake, and when we see the Son dying the ignominious death of the cross.

ANOINTING OF JESUS IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE

Luke 7:36-50.

Faith working by love, is the central idea in this story. The woman is clearly shown to love much and to possess great faith.

This woman is a sinner recognized as such by both the Pharisee and Jesus. While the Savior is in the Pharisee's house dining, the woman comes repenting and kneels at Jesus' feet. Her tears flow so freely that she washes his feet with them. She wipes his feet with her hair, and anoints them with costly ointment. The Pharisee seeing this, discounts his guest for permitting such a sinner to wash his feet; but Jesus reminds him of what he did not do, and puts in contrast what she has done for him. Simon is led to see that his love is nothing as shown by his action, when compared with what the poor woman has done. Therefore, Jesus says, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loves much. * * * Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Here we have a sinner saved by faith. Thru great confidence she loves Jesus, and shows it by worshipping him and offering true service to him. She also sacrifices perhaps all her earnings to anoint his feet. She shows clearly her love and repentance by her actions. Jesus is convinced and satisfied.

The idealization of faith, repentance, and love is rather high. The woman is a recognized sinner of the city, but she is willing to give all she has and to perform the most menial service possible to show her love for Christ. No one can mistake her love, her repentance, or her faith.

This story is in sad contrast with the rich young man who came to Jesus. The latter refuses to do even what Jesus asks him to do; he cannot see his way clearly to

give up all and fall in line with Jesus' will. In other words he cannot see Jesus, but instead, his wealth.

WOMAN WITH ISSUE OF BLOOD

Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-35, Luke 8:43-48.

Faith in even a touch is the theme of this bit of narration, a faith so remarkable, so wonderful that it has been handed down the centuries.

In this poem we see the world-wide difference between divine and human physicians. This woman has been treated by physicians for twelve years, has spent all she had, and has grown worse. She now comes to the great physician, but he is thronged by a multitude. She cannot think of engaging his attention, but her faith in the divine healer is so great that she fully expects total recovery if she but touch the hem of his garment. So without letting Jesus know of her presence, she slips up and merely touches the hem of his garment. Instantly she feels her disease has left her.

Jesus turns around and asks who touched him. The disciples think it is a queer question inasmuch as he is pressed on all sides; but Christ still maintains that virtue has gone out of him. Trembling the healed woman falls at his feet and tells him all. Then says Jesus, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

The idealization here is very remarkable, for such a thing as a touch healing a person had never been known. The woman had tried the doctors for twelve years, and now to think that a touch would instantly heal her. Such faith is wonderful.

On basis of idealization we are reminded of the Centurion's Servant where he said to Christ, "Only speak the word and my servant shall be healed,"—just a word—healing at a distance. Again, the Brazen Serpent has a similar idealization, because here only a look was necessary for complete healing. If the sick one in agony because of the

snake bites, could only be dragged to the door of the tent and caused to look at the Brazen Serpent, instantly complete health would be restored. Another comparison may be made with the hymn, "Look and Live," where the idealization is based on a look at the Christ, resulting in life.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56.

We see here a man tried to the uttermost in his *faith*. The ruler of the synagogue hastens to Jesus and prostrates himself at his feet, praying him to come at *once*, for his daughter lies dying. There was no time to lose, but Jesus delayed, stopping to heal a woman with an issue of blood. No one can fully imagine the awful suspense in Jairus' mind. Now one comes and tells him to trouble the Master no further, for his daughter is already dead. Jesus hearing it, says, "Fear not, only believe." Here the test is at the highest. Jesus has delayed until the damsel is dead, and how can he do anything now? Yet the presumption is that Jairus believed Jesus would bring his daughter to life.

On reaching the house the mourners were already in a hubbub. When Jesus tells them the maid is not dead, they laugh him to scorn; but he puts them all out and takes the father, mother, Peter, James and John and enters the death chamber. In an atmosphere of faith, he simply takes the maid by the hand and says, "Talatha Cumi," which being interpreted, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise!" Immediately she arises and walks. Only imagination can paint the greeting between the father and daughter. No doubt the greeting between mother and daughter was just as cordial.

Nowhere in secular literature do we find such flights of idealization attempted. Faith in immediate results with death in the way, is not worked out by any of the secular poets.

If we compare this poem with the Raising of Lazarus, seemingly we find greater faith here, for there is no evidence

on Jairus' part that he doubted; but there is on Martha's part as to immediate aid.

JOHN BEHEADED

Mark 6:17-20, Matthew 14:1-14, Luke 3:19-20.

From the standpoint of John the Baptist, the theme is *duty sublime*; from Herod's standpoint, *rashness*; from the daughter's standpoint, *giddiness*.

From the utter wickedness and malice of Herodias and Herod, we pass to the almost sublime conception of duty of John the Forerunner.

John is a typical man of God, doing his duty even tho the heavens fall. Herod is the wicked king of the country and is therefore to be dreaded, and Herodias more so; John fearlessly tell Herod he should not have his brother Philip's wife. This so angers the wicked woman that she tries to kill the preacher, but Herod fears the people who think John a prophet. Foiled in her attempt on John's life, the wily woman instructs her daughter how to get her enemy's head. The king is to have a birthday soon. The giddy daughter, pursuant to her vengeful mother's plans, goes in and dances before the drunken king. Being much pleased Herod asks the daughter to state what she desires, promising it even to the half of his kingdom. Now is her chance to please her mother. So she asks for John the Baptist's head in a charger. The king orders it given to her altho he feels some compunction of conscience in doing so. It is plain that Herodias is even more vile than the adulterous beast whom she is living with.

Duty is very highly idealized here, for John gives his life in order to do his duty. Men of his stamp are not myriad in number. Stephen, Paul and Christ were as fearless in doing their duty. One of the greatest needs of the day is fearless defenders of the right.

Rashness and giddiness are typified in Herod and the daughter. Herod never should have made such a rash promise

to his step-daughter, nor should he have fulfilled such a promise, even tho in the presence of his lords. The vow and its fulfilment are very much like Jephthah's rash vow, though rashness in Jephthah is more highly idealized, for he had sixty days in which to deliberate on an only *daughter's* death.

THE FIVE THOUSAND

Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14.

Two themes claim attention; viz., the *all sufficiency of God* and the *unswerving purpose of Jesus*.

As long as Jesus had been with the disciples they had not yet learned that he is all-sufficient. Seeing a multitude of perhaps ten thousand people, they are troubled about what they are to do for food. This seething mass of humanity, having become wrought up by Jesus' miracles, will not even let him go into a secluded spot across the sea to hold a conference with his returned disciples. They follow him to the other side of the sea, and he has compassion on them. The doubting disciples are given a lesson in the all-sufficiency of God. With five loaves and two fishes, not enough for one hungry boy, they see Jesus feed this multitude, and take up afterwards twelve baskets full of fragments. The excited multitude attempt to make him king, but true to his unswerving spiritual purpose he refused.

This no doubt calls up the manna in the Wilderness, Gideon with his three hundred, Isaiah's prayer meeting when Sennacherib invaded Judea. So should it say to us that "one and the Lord are a majority," and that Jesus is sufficient for *any* occasion.

This poem may also be compared with Saint Agnes' Eve by Tennyson. Here the worshipper is fully satisfied with God, and regards him as altogether sufficient. We may also compare the poem with Washington refusing to become king of America. In contrast we see Caesar reluctantly refusing the crown.

JOHN DOUBTING THE MESSIAHSHIP OF CHRIST

Matthew 11:2-19, Luke 7:18-35.

The theme of this narrative is clear from the subject. *Doubt*, that demon which so disturbs man's peace, is here highly idealized. On the part of Jesus, *perfect poise* is the theme.

John, who has been all action, lies languishing in a gloomy prison. He learns that the kingdom of Christ is proceeding very slowly, in painful contrast with his own dash. The good man being depleted in both body and mind, begins to doubt, and sends his disciples to ask Jesus if he really *is* the Messiah, or should they look for another. Jesus receives the messengers kindly and tells them to note what is being done; that the poor have the gospel preached to them; the lame are healed, the blind made to see; the dumb, to speak; the deaf, to hear; the lepers are cleansed; the dead are raised up. They are then to report and let John be judge.

After the messengers leave, Jesus pronounces upon John encomiums which rarely fall from his lips. Although doubted, Jesus treats the doubter in a Godlike way.

This doubt is remarkable for two reasons. 1. John was divinely appointed as the forerunner of Christ to prepare the way. 2. He had been told that on whomsoever he saw the Spirit descending and lighting, the same should be the Messiah. John, after he baptized Christ, saw this manifestation from heaven and even heard the voice of God speaking: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." In the face of such evidence, his doubt is remarkable.

This case of doubt may be put in striking contrast with the sublime faith of Joseph even in the inner prison, with Daniel's Godlike faith, as well as with Paul's. These stalwarts undergoing every hardship and standing firm in the faith, are wholesome.

We may further compare with doubting Thomas, all of the disciples on at least two occasions, Joshua and the elders

after the defeat at Ai, Israelites sighing for the flesh pots of Egypt, Elijah when Jezebel threatened him, and Peter walking on the sea. As to perfect poise, Joseph, Paul and Henry the Fifth may be cited as comparisons.

PETER WALKING ON THE SEA

Matthew 14:24-36, Mark 6:47-56, John 6:16-21.

Doubt, the all but universal enemy of mankind, receives a high degree of idealization in this story. This is rather remarkable since Peter had such a background of assurance.

Just the day before, Jesus had fed the five thousand. They had tried to crown him king, but he got his disciples aboard on the lake, dismissed the multitudes, and went up into the mountain to pray, for being a man he must have been tempted.

This is one time that he prays all night. The disciples have been struggling all this time with the waves, for the wind has been tearing down the mountains and piling up the sea. About the fourth watch Jesus comes down the mountain and walks on the sea. The frightened disciples think he is a ghost, but when he speaks they know his voice. Impetuous Peter tells Jesus to bid him come down on the sea if it be the Christ. Jesus accedes to his wishes, and Peter actually walks on the sea so long as his eyes are fixed on the Master. But he takes them off of Jesus and puts them on the boisterous waves. At that moment he begins to sink. He cries out, "Lord, save me." Jesus rescues him, and says to him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" On going up into the boat, the winds cease their roaring, and all recognize him to be the Son of God.

This idealization of doubt is heightened by the fact that Peter had seen the great miracle of the loaves and fishes the day before. Furthermore he had seen Jesus perform wonderful miracles during the past year. Even now he sees Him walking on the sea. What more evidence does he need?

We are reminded of John the Baptist doubting the Christ even tho he had as much evidence of Christ's divinity as had Peter. The doubt in Stilling the Tempest also comes to mind, and in the Old Testament Elijah's praying to die after the wonderful demonstration before the Prophets of Baal. From the highest, Elijah sank to the lowest, and with no adequate cause,—only Jezebel's threat. How strange that doubt creeps in so soon after such marvelous demonstrations of God's power!

In secular literature we find types of the doubt of Bryant in his Waterfowl, of Geraint in Idyls of the King, of Othello, of Leontes in Winter's Tale, and of Posthumous in Cymbeline. The demon, doubt, in some of these, committed great ravages. In fact, one of life's worst demons is doubt. No wonder Jesus based the Christian religion on faith. Practically all human happiness is based upon it. Confidence, frankness, and square dealing would largely make a heaven of this earth.

SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER

Matthew 15:21-31, Mark 7:24-37.

Persistency of faith is the organizing idea of this poem. Like Jacob of old, the Gentile woman persists until she is blessed.

Jesus has left Palestine and gone into the coast of Tyre and Sidon, seeking a place of retirement; but we are told that "he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet." The woman is a Greek and has no claim on Christ, yet she pleads with him to cast the devil out of her daughter. Jesus tells her he is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But this opposition only increases her earnestness, for she continues to worship and cries out, "Lord, help me." Such faith and zeal in winning souls for Christ would soon win the world. Now she is reminded of the fact that she is a dog, that "it is not meet to take the children's

bread and cast it to dogs." Tho called a dog, the anxious mother is undaunted, and more earnestly than ever she replies, "Yes, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Jesus is won by her faith, and says to her, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

This is certainly a high degree of idealization. Rarely do we see such persistency in the face of such obstacles and rebuffs. We are reminded of the Importunate Widow by this. The young man climbing the mountain in *Excelsior* has a similar faith in his ideal of living under the inspiration of the highest. Paul in overcoming the tremendous obstacles against him, manifested a persistency of faith which has been the inspiration of millions of Christians. The disciples prayed ten days before their Pentecost came. Daniel over on the Euphrates held on to God in prayer for twenty-one days before the blessing was given him. The disciples prayed for Peter seven days, that his faith fail him not. Such persistency is evidently pleasing to God.

STILLING THE TEMPEST

Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25

The demons of *doubt* and *fear* are the salient ideas in this story. These disciples evidently did not have an abiding God-consciousness.

Jesus is crossing the Sea of Galilee with his disciples when a storm arises. The fierce tempest so lashes the sea that the waves cover the boat and begin to fill it. Destruction seems to threaten them. The disciples, instead of realizing the presence of the divine, become alarmed and even terror-stricken. They find the tired Master sleeping in one end of the boat, entirely oblivious of the threatening elements. They cry out to him. "Lord, save us or we perish." He, rising, rebukes the winds and waves, and they lie down as gentle as a lamb. Then he chides the fearing, doubting dis-

ciples, saying, "Where is your faith? Why are ye fearful, O ye of *little* faith? Have ye not *yet* faith?" So to speak, have you been with me over a year and yet cannot trust? But they only marvel at him, saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

This idealization undoubtedly comes home to all of us. How often do we, like Peter on the sea, take our eyes off of Jesus and immediately begin to sink? How *much* of the time do we have a God-consciousness? Is it abiding? How fearful many are, doubting that the Lord is their shepherd.

John Wesley, when coming to America as a missionary, found out in a terrific storm that he could not trust God and therefore needed to be converted. He saw the Moravians on board the tossing vessel as calm as was Jesus in the boat on Galilee. He went back home to seek his Lord and to come into such fellowship with him that he could trust him at all times and under all circumstances. God should be so real to every Christian that faith is unwavering. He should be able to say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;" or even in the sunset of life, say with Tennyson,

"I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar."

This poem may be further compared with Peter attempting to walk on the sea, and sinking because he took his eyes off of Jesus and put them on the boisterous waves. It also calls up the fearing children of Israel on scores of occasions; also the disciples when Jesus was betrayed. In contrast with it we mention Daniel in the Lions' den, the three men in the fiery furnace, Joseph tempted, Joshua and Caleb about to be stoned, the disciples after Pentecost, Paul in his many dangers, Jesus in every hour of trial.

THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND

Matthew 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:6-11.

Loyalty to the letter of the law, is the theme of this story; loyalty to the letter killeth, by killing love, mercy, compassion and other Christian virtues.

Jesus in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, sees a man with a withered hand. The scribes and Pharisees are watching to see what he will do, so that they may accuse him. He knows their thoughts, and asks them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save life, or to destroy it? What man of you shall there be, who shall have one sheep, and if this shall fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." No one says a word. Then Jesus commands the man to stretch forth his hand, and it is healed. But the Pharisees "were filled with madness" and "took counsel against him, how they might destroy him."

These cruel so-called religious leaders think it nothing to be utterly heartless to the poor afflicted man, or to kill Jesus, but it is simply awful to cross one of *their* incorrect interpretations of the law! These Pharisees have had many cousins all down the ages, and even some are left in the morning of the twentieth century. The ages are strewn with their wrecks. We find other parallels for this story in the healing done at the Feast of Purim and also the curing of the woman who had been drawn over upon herself for eighteen years. From the standpoint of heartlessness and cruelty we may further compare the story with The Confessional and the killing of the girl in the convent by Marmion.

TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36.

In this most spectacular presentation we have more than one ideal portrayed. From one standpoint the ideal is the

pre-eminence of Jesus; from another viewpoint the ideal is *consecration*.

Jesus takes Peter, James and John and goes on Mount Hermon to pray. Late in the night, sleep overcomes the three apostles, but Jesus prays on. His face becomes shining as the sun, his raiment, white and glistening. The disciples awake, and Peter says some strange things. The dazzling Shekinah overshadows them. Two of the immortals appear on the scene, one dead fourteen hundred years, the other dead nine hundred years. They lay respectively the law and prophecy down at Jesus' feet. When lo! out of heaven God himself speaks, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Not Moses, not Elijah, but Jesus is given the pre-eminence. We find the same preference given in Heb. 1:1 and 2. The Christ is put above the great law-giver and one of the greatest representatives of prophecy.

In this imagery we also see consecration idealized. Jesus could have gone away to heaven, as Elijah did, but he is fully consecrated to God and decides to go down Gethsemane road. He is altogether resigned to his fate, as the conversation with the immortals shows, but the disciples cannot learn the lesson, tho so impressively given. They are not transfigured with their Christ; it took a Pentecost to consecrate them.

To parallel this poem in secular literature, we have searched in vain. In its spectacular presentation and richness of idealization, we cannot find a parallel for it only in the Bible. Sinai's mountain, John on the Isle of Patmos, and the apocalyptic visions of Ezekiel and Daniel, remind one of Transfiguration mountain scene.

FORGIVENESS

Matthew 18:15-35.

Here the theme is *forgiveness*, or a contrast between God's

love and man's. Jesus is telling the story, and he certainly knows.

We seem to be swept from the almost infinitesimal of man's love to the absolutely wonderful of God's love and forgiveness.

The story is preluded by a rule of action given by Jesus for the settling of difficulties in the church. Says Jesus, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." In another place in God's word, the *offender* is told to go and make it right with the one offended. Thus the obligation to be at peace with our fellowman is placed equally on offender and offended. Jesus further says, "If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." If this law of procedure would be followed, much of the very *hades* there is in the church would be eliminated.

Now Peter, seemingly having a wave of love sweeping over his soul, says to Christ, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" No doubt Peter feels he is becoming very, very good to put it so large; but Jesus fairly knocks him down with mathematics. Peter, will you apply arithmetic to such a matter? "Until seven times? Until seventy times seven!" Then to put the cap sheaf on this thunder bolt, the masterful story teller narrates one of the most wonderful bits of idealization that ever fell from even divine lips. In modern parlance, Jesus says, let me show you my Father's love and forgiveness set over against man's.

The kingdom of heaven or the church is like unto a certain king who would take account of his servants. One is brought to him who owes him ten thousand talents or about twelve

million dollars. Since there were no millionaires in that day, this is an impossible sum to pay, and so is the case with this poor debtor. The king now commands him together with his wife and children to be sold until payment can be made. The servant then falls down and worships his master and says, "Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." This touches the master's heart, and he forgives him the entire debt. This manifestation of a very Pacific Ocean of love and forgiveness is the picture of the dear God. Now begins the exceedingly painful contrast. This very servant goes out and finds one of his fellow-servants who owes him the pitiful little sum of one hundred pence, about sixteen dollars and twenty-five cents in our money. He seizes the poor man by the throat and says, "Pay me that thou owest." A veritable demon seems to possess the forgiven debtor. The poor servant falls down and beseeches the man, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," the *very* words that were said to the king. But they now fall unheeded on *man's* ears, for he thrusts the poor fellow into prison until he can pay the debt. We have compared God's love and forgiveness to the Pacific Ocean, but where is the spring on earth so infinitesimally small as to represent this *man's* forgiveness?

The fellow servants of the poor debtor take the matter up and report to the king, who commands the forgiven rascal to be brought before him. Now he has fairly to face the cannon's mouth, for the king says, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" The king being wroth, delivers the servant over to the tormentors, till he shall pay *all* that was due him. This, of course, is an impossibility. "So likewise," says Jesus, "shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." This is in harmony with Jesus' famous words: "If ye forgive not men

their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses." In the face of this, how can any one who harbors unforgiveness in his heart claim to be a Christian?

This poem in its entirety is without parallel in secular literature. In the Merchant of Venice we see a type of unforgiveness perhaps as cruel and heartless as the debtor here is, but we do not find in the Christian of that play the high type of forgiveness that is portrayed in this Biblical poem.

JESUS SHOWS WHO ARE WORTHY TO FOLLOW HIM

Matthew 8:19-22, Luke 9:57-62.

In these scriptures we see the *true follower of Christ* highly idealized. Jesus is made first and not second, above every other consideration in the world. This is a verification of the text, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God."

We see a scribe seemingly eager to follow Jesus. Running to him, the scribe says, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." But Jesus' answer seems to imply this: are you so sure you want to follow me? In your enthusiasm have you counted the cost? "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." In the light of such *privation* do you now think you want to follow me?

Another of his disciples makes the seemingly reasonable request to be permitted to go and bury his dead father. But Jesus replies, "Let the dead bury their dead." Still another disciple desires to go and bid his loved ones farewell. Jesus' reply in this case is, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

These cases may seem extreme, but they only idealize adequately *true discipleship*. If one is to be worthy in Jesus' sight, he must seek "*first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." As a rule men and even too many Christians are making other things first, and God second. The Divine will never takes a second place in any man's heart. He must

have the right of way or nothing at all. He has said of the lukewarm, "I will spew you out of my mouth."

In degree of idealization this story may well be compared with *The Pearl of Greatest Price*, the *Treasure Hidden in a Field*, *The Rich Young Ruler* who would not pay the price, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Nothing short of *first* valuation will pass with God.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

John 8:1-11.

In this story the theme is *mercy*. Nothing but mercy could reach such a character.

Jesus is in the temple teaching great crowds of people, when the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman to him and say, "Master, this woman has been taken in adultery, in the very act. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such: what then sayest thou of her? And this they said tempting him, that they might have whereof to accuse him." But Jesus simply stoops down and writes in the sand. They keep asking him the question. He finally replies, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." Then they like sheep-killing dogs begin to file out until no one but the woman is left. Jesus asks where her accusers are, and if any man has condemned her. She replies, "No man, Lord." Jesus now pronounces his great denouement, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

The idealization here is remarkable, for there can be no doubt as to the woman's guilt. She does not deny it; nor does Jesus give any idea that she is innocent, but on the other hand clearly implies that she is guilty. Inasmuch as adultery is the most flagrant sin mentioned in the Bible, Jesus' great mercy on this occasion is wonderful. So far as we know the woman does not plead for mercy. This is certainly a type of mercy that would revolutionize society and the church if it were practiced.

Jesus' mercy here reminds us of his prayer for his per-

secutors at the cross, Stephen's prayer when he was stoned, and also Portia's famous plea for mercy in the Merchant of Venice.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:10-18.

In this famous chapter we have the *ideal minister* portrayed. Jesus in the particular case is the minister, and he says, "I am the way." He is only a type of what he wishes *all* of his ministers to be.

The antipodal points are clearly set forth. We pass from a mere careless hireling to the ideal pastor.

Jesus states in the outset, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He is a life-giver as every minister should be. He is there to see to it that his flock has more abundant life. He is their watchful shepherd and gives his very life for his sheep. The good minister really puts his whole life into his work, and truly lays down his life for his brethren.

The hireling is set over in contrast to the good shepherd. The sheep do not belong to him. He sees the wolf coming, and flees, leaving the beast to devour and scatter the sheep. We are told that he flees because he is a hireling and cares not for the sheep. This monstrosity is certainly typical.

Then Jesus in painful contrast to the hireling says, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." The intimate relation between Jesus and his sheep is in wholesome contrast to the relation between the hireling and the flock. The relation of intimacy is as close, Jesus tells us, as it is between him and his Father. Beautiful and comforting indeed!

Then the good shepherd speaks of his cherished idea of the unity of the fold even when all "other sheep" shall be brought into it.

On the point of *pastoral care* this poem may be compared with Psalm 23, but the former excels the latter in idealization. The loving touch and deep devotion of the Christ for his people are more felt by the reader of John 10 than is the watchful providence in the Twenty-third Psalm.

JESUS SCORING THE OUTWARD SHOW OF HOLINESS IN THE PHARISEES

Luke 11:37-45.

The most suggestive theme of this scripture is *Externals versus Internals*, or *Outward Show versus Inward Being*, or *Churchianity versus Christianity*, or *Formalism Run to Seed*, as has been only too common down thru the ages.

Jesus is invited to dine with a Pharisee. The latter is very much surprised to see the Master go in and eat without washing his hands. This is the occasion of some very plain remarks by the visitor. Says Jesus, "Ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. * * * Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over *judgment* and the *love* of God: *these* ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."

These woes are very suggestive. So many *never* pass beyond the mint and rue to the judgment and love of God. And as Jesus suggests, so many do not pass beyond washing the external or outside to washing the internal. They continue counting their beads, performing some externals, and fail to penetrate to the deeper significance within. Is it any wonder that Jesus by one fell swoop, as it were, brushed aside the ritualism of Judaism and left only two externals; viz., the

Lord's Supper and Baptism! And even these have become idols to many, for only too often the loving, forgiving, worshipful Christ is not seen thru them.

This, to say the least, is certainly striking idealization of the internal as set over against the external. We might say here that there is a universal psychology for the former, but not for the latter. Any one knows that the spiritual significance of Foot-washing and Saluting One Another with the Holy Kiss is universal, but the external expression of this spirit of humility and love has certainly changed with custom and conditions, such as different footwear and the tobacco habit.

The poem, Reality versus Appearance, may be compared with this story. Also the Jewish church of the New Testament largely illustrates the emphasis of the external as set over against the internal of the church that Christ came to found. The Uncrowned King, by Harold Bell Wright, illustrates the same great theme.

GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:30-37.

In this beautiful poem we have the great principle of the *brotherhood of man* highly idealized. A man is seen lying on the ground, wounded, bleeding, and half dead. It was not by chance that Jesus put a preacher first; by this means the acme of expectation of help is raised at once, only to be blasted. A priest of all men is nearest to God, nearer even than a woman. Surely he will help the poor needy creature lying there. But no, he selfishly passes by on the other side. Next to appear on the scene is a fellow Jew, a fellow church member. Again expectancy is raised, but the Levite simply looks at the pitiable object and moves on. Now at the greatest remove from the preacher we see a Samaritan approaching, despised by the Jew. Nothing can be expected from one of another race and religion, but contrary to all expectations the Samaritan takes pity on the poor wounded

man, goes to him, binds up his wounds, pours in oil and wine, sets him on his own beast, brings him to an inn, and takes care of him. On the morrow the Samaritan pays the host two pence and tells him to take good care of the poor fellow, make out his bill, and when he returns he will pay it. Here we see brotherhood not limited by race, religion, or enmity. We are made to ascend from the hades of selfishness to the heaven of universal brotherhood, one of Jesus' most loved ideals.

The striking feature about the idealization is that a priest who is next to God in this world, is put first; while a Samaritan, a mongrel, a creature utterly detested by a Jew, is placed last. Jesus was undoubtedly a consummate artist in his illustrations.

The gospel of service is given an idealization here that universal brotherhood of man warrants. Lodges have grown phenomenally because of service rendered. The churches should return to the Pauline idea of service. Too many churches are like the picture of the priest and Levite. While the lodge is not in sight of the church in respect to spiritual well-being, it does sometimes put to shame the practical helpfulness of some churches.

COVETOUSNESS

Luke 12:13-21.

Jesus in this scripture vividly idealizes one of the most universal traits of man. The covetous man is plainly shown to be a fool.

The parable is preluded by a man asking Jesus to make his brother divide his inheritance with him. Christ refuses to act as judge in such small matters and tells the man to "beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." How true this is, and how *little* is it considered.

Jesus now illustrates his idea by means of a story. The lands of a certain rich man produced bountifully, so that he

had insufficient barn-room for his products. He says to himself, "I will pull down my barns and build larger ones. Then will I say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said unto him, Thou fool, *this* night thy soul shall be required of thee." The man seems almost as selfish and oblivious to the needs of his fellowman as a fat hog.

Jesus now asks the question, "Whose shall these things (belonging to the rich man) be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." His words in another place are apropos: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The suddenness of destruction and the awfulness of the term applied to a covetous man, show the degree of idealization. In Colossians 3:5 covetousness is called a form of idolatry. "Mortify * * * covetousness which is a *form of idolatry*."

This story may be compared with Judas selling Christ, Joseph's brothers selling him for twenty pieces of silver, Achan's stealing, Gehazi's attempted deception, Ananias and Sapphira. The case made out against the covetous man renders it impossible for him ever to realize heaven. Even the case against the rich man is rather dark, tho he may rise above his riches and worship God. Selfishness, the all but universal sin of man, has nothing whatever in common with the completely unselfish Christ and the altruistic God; nor has it anything in common with Christianity. The Shylocks, Macbeths, the Edmunds, the Iagos, the Sauls, the Cains, and the Judases have always been looked upon as being best fitted to go on all-fours and grunt like their kind. No heaven, unless it be a hog-heaven, would suit them. In contrast, the beautiful unselfishness of the sun, moon, stars and the rains represents the generous heart of God.

THE PARABLE OF THE FRUITLESS FIG-TREE

Luke 13:6-9.

Fruit-bearing is the central idea of this little story. Terrible indeed is the penalty attached to non-fruit-bearing.

A man has a fig tree in his vineyard, and has been coming for three years to gather fruit from it; but every year he finds none. He immediately orders the tree cut down, for it has been worthless long enough. Death is the awful punishment for inactivity which results in no fruit bearing. But the gardener, like one who loves and therefore is willing to give another trial, pleads that the tree may be spared one more year. He promises to dig around it, enrich it, and give it every opportunity to do something.

This idealization is very high and very suggestive. No greater penalty than death can be assigned. And yet, after three years of trial and disappointment, the owner is willing to give the tree one more chance to do something. The Lord is certainly long-suffering with the indifferent, but the time will come when it will be too late.

How different the idealization here from that of the Pauline work-brittle type or the Christ type. In almost as great contrast do we find the Chambered Nautilus and the young man in Excelsior. A parallel case is seen in the one-talent man who went and digged in the earth and hid his lord's money. The idealization, however, is higher in this case, for the latter's sentence seems like the crack of doom. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

JESUS HEALING THE INFIRM WOMAN

Luke 13:10-17.

True helpfulness versus blatant hypocrisy, is the theme of this story. The contrast brought out is painful, but not so very uncommon. The ruler of the synagogue was only a legalist who could not see beyond the external or letter of the law, as many cannot today.

Jesus finds a poor afflicted woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. She has been suffering for eighteen years and is entirely bent over on herself, in the most horrible bondage. Jesus is moved with compassion for her, and immediately heals her. She, being relieved from her bondage, glorifies God; but the ruler of the synagogue has no more sympathy for the unfortunate woman than he has for a worm. He flies into a rage because Jesus has healed on the Sabbath day. He blurts out to the people: "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Now Jesus knows that the pompous pious man cares nothing for the Sabbath day, and proceeds to prove it to him, and at the same time take some of the wind out of his sails. Says Jesus, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

So great was the thunderbolt hurled at the ruler that he with all of the adversaries of Jesus looked ashamed, but the people rejoiced greatly in the victory.

On the side of true helpfulness, this story calls up the woman with the issue of blood, the man at the Pool of Bethesda, and Jesus' myriad acts of service to help the other fellow. The dark side of the theme recalls the healing of the impotent man at the Feast of Purim, also other cases of healing on the Sabbath where the enraged Jews thought it nothing to plan to kill Jesus. Indeed is it well said of them, they gape at a gnat and swallow a camel.

HUMILITY

Matthew 18:1-7, Mark 9:33-37.

As Jesus proceeds to Capernaum, the disciples drop back a little and dispute over who is to be greatest. Jesus chides them, first asking what they were talking about. Then he

says, "If any man be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all." Only the road of service is the true way to greatness.

He now takes a little child and sets him on his knee and says, "Except ye become as a little child, ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." In other words, you must have the simple, never-doubting, and ever-trusting faith of a little child, you must have its humble spirit, purity, and true love, which ever abides, in order that you may enter into the kingdom. This ideal is about as high as even God can put it. It means something to be a Christian.

Jesus now says, "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me; but whoso shall cause one of these little ones who believe on me to stumble, it is better for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be cast into the depth of the sea."

The idealization of humility here must have been a blow to the contentious disciples. The standard set up by Christ certainly makes any one think seriously.

This should not have been anything new to the disciples, for Jesus had lived this high ideal before them continuously. Other instances of the idealization of humility, not of the Uriah Heep kind, are difficult to find.

LOST SHEEP

Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7.

This beautiful poem has been immortalized in song. Its theme is "*Constancy of Love*," a virtue that poets will never cease to sing about.

The "ninety and nine" are safe, but

"One is out on the mountains bleak and bare,
Far from the tender shepherd's care."

He leaves the fold and seeks the lost one, nor does he stop his search in the darkness and storm until he finds it.

Picking it up tenderly in his arms, with no word of rebuke, he carries it back to the fold.

How different from the course usually taken, the course of indifference where no love is shown, and the one gone astray is allowed to die of neglect and be finally lost! Even in this particular parable of the Lost Sheep, we see this spirit manifest in the scribes and Pharisees. The parable of the Great Supper has just been given in which we see these haughty impostors rejecting the invitation, and in their stead the lame, the halt, the poor, and the blind coming to the supper from the by-ways and hedges. It maddens the scribes and Pharisees to see Jesus so tender with sinners. They would not enter themselves and were trying to prevent others from entering. The incident produced the three parables; viz., Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Prodigal Son. Jesus in a flashlight illustration shows the Pharisees how unlike God they are, for in this parable God goes out to seek the lost; he yearns for the lost. And in the Prodigal Son we see the sinner yearning for and seeking God.

Poets have made this theme glorious. Longfellow in *Evangeline*, Tennyson in *Enoch Arden* and *Geraint and Enid*, Shakespeare in *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*, have so idealized constancy as to make it the brightest star in the heavens, but no one has given it the beauty and glory we find in its connection with God and Christ. The Bible gives us a perfection of constancy unknown to secular poets. The Divine continues to lavish his gifts upon even the wicked, and unstintingly to bless them while they live, altho there is no reciprocation. No mother's love to her own son was ever more constant than God's love for both the righteous and unrighteous. One way God has of ministering to us is thru physical means. If men could realize this and appreciate God's goodness to them, very different would be their treatment of him.

PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-32.

Many litterateurs, for example, Dickens, have regarded this poem as the most beautiful picture in literature. In it we see *repentance and mercy* given a high degree of idealization. The poor, sinful boy goes down and down to the lowest depths. Selfish, exacting, unkind, he leaves home without bidding father, mother, or brother goodbye. Since a fool and his money soon part, so it is with him. He spends it in riotous living and even goes as low as anyone can get in this world; he descends into the hell of adultery with harlots. But when he is without money, without friends, without food except husks, with only hogs as his company, he comes to himself and silently determines to ascend out of the pit. He thinks of home, the plenty there even for the servants; he thinks of father and mother and his own sinful state. The manhood that remains in him asserts itself, and he says, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." The penitent is willing to do *anything* for the privilege of returning to father.

The father sees him coming in the distance and bounds forward to meet him. Such a greeting for a moral reprobate! The father covers his face with kisses, appears not even to listen to the poor boy's wail of how mean he has been, but orders the best robe put on him, a ring on his finger, shoes on his bare feet, and the fatted calf killed. The father and mother are in ecstasy over the return of the "lost, the dead."

Just here a sudden thunder-cloud comes up and explodes. The unbrotherly brother in sullenness and anger comes around outside and asks, "What's the matter?" The good father comes out and tries to pacify him, but all to no purpose. The brother will not even recognize the Prodigal penitent as his brother, but says, "this *thy* son."

Here in the brother we have unbrotherliness idealized. Altho he has been seemingly very obedient, it has been in the letter of the law; in the spirit he is disobedient. He is a type of only too many people who are obeying the letter, but their hearts are far from God. They can hardly realize that they are real backsliders.

The repentance of the Prodigal is certainly complete. His surrender is as full as one can imagine. By it we are reminded of Guinevere, Leontes, Posthumous, Sir Launfal, The Ancient Mariner, Paul, Peter and the woman who washed Christ's feet with her tears.

The mercy as well as the paternal love of the father is most highly idealized. On any other plane than Christianity, no mercy could be expected for such a reprobate. But this type of the merciful loving heavenly Father shows a mercy and a devotion which shine like the morning star. A more thrilling picture of love is nowhere else to be found; it mirrors the whole of the beautiful gospel of love.

In this poem we are plunged to the depths of selfishness, ingratitude, unkindness, anger, spite, unbrotherliness, sinful pleasures and adultery with harlots. From these awful caverns we are raised to the paradise of unselfishness, gratitude, kindness, brotherliness, joy, mercy, and the deepest devotion of paternal love.

RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16:19-31.

The great principle of *retribution*, or reaping what we have sown, is the central idea in this poem. The embodiment or imagery is very vivid.

We see four striking pictures in the poem. The first and last states of both Lazarus and the rich man are vividly contrasted. In the former the transition is from the direst need and penury to the highest joy of heavenly life, while in the latter we pass from highest worldly luxury and ease to the most torturous physical condition.

The beggar, Lazarus, is "full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table," even the "dogs came and licked his sores." The rich man seems to be unmindful of the unfortunate beggar. He is represented as "clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." After a time the poor beggar dies and is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man dies too, "and in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." He cries aloud, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." When too late, he could pray. Abraham replies, "Son, remember that you in your life time received good things, but Lazarus, evil things; now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Seeing no help for his own wretched condition, the rich man at once becomes eloquent for his brothers. "I pray you, Father, that you send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them lest they also come into this place of torment."

He becomes a good preacher when it is only too late. Again Abraham replies, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." But this does not still the concerned sufferer, for he replies, "Nay, father Abraham, but if one goes unto them from the dead, they will repent." Now father Abraham gives the ultimatum: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho one should rise from the dead."

The contrasted pictures of the first and last conditions of the two men, are striking indeed. Dives went to his own place; psychologically and rationally this could not be otherwise. Each man makes his own destiny. Utter selfishness could not enjoy absolute unselfishness, such as obtains in heaven.

The rich man does not plead for spiritual regeneration but for relief from physical pain. Probably in pleading for his brothers only he has no wider vision.

This poem may be compared with Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, and a number of Shakespeare's plays where this great world principle of retribution is so dramatically worked out. Of course a secular writer does not dare to speak from an unseen and eternal shore.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

John 11:1-45.

The purpose of this narrative is (1) to show *the love of Jesus for man versus the love of the heads of the Jewish church for man*, (2) to confirm the faith of the apostles and others, in his Messiahship, (3) *love versus hate*.

We are swept from the hellish hatred of the Sanhedrin to the heaven of love, sympathy, and helpfulness of Jesus.

The favorite resting place of Jesus was the little home that graced Olivet's brow. One in that home had anointed Jesus with the costly spikenard and had wiped his feet with her hair. When the brother is near death's door the sisters, Martha and Mary, send for Jesus; but he waits two days before starting. Jesus loves the family. Altho he was in danger of being stoned when he made his last trip to Judea, his love for Lazarus and the sisters is so great that he braves the threatening perils.

Jesus tells the apostles that for the sake of strengthening their faith, he is glad that Lazarus is already dead. His remark surely indicates a waning faith on the part of the disciples at this time.

On arriving in the neighborhood of Bethany, he is informed that Lazarus has been dead four days. The two sisters are heartbroken and largely faithless, so far as immediate help is concerned. Jesus' weeping, no doubt, is because of their lack of faith in him, as well as because of his sympathy for them. At the grave he prays to his Father

and then commands in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Instantly the dead man comes forth bound in grave clothes. Only the imagination can paint the picture of the joyous manifestations of the two sisters.

But we must now pass from this heaven of sympathy, love, and genuine helpfulness to the diabolism of the church's hate. Immediately the Sanhedrin assembled, and for this good deed they passed sentence of death on Jesus. This caused him to remain in hiding in Ephraim for two weeks before he came to Jerusalem for the last time when the sentence was actually carried out.

The idealization here is one of the highest in Holy Writ. Jesus, in the face of the threatened stoning, knowing without doubt that his coming means his speedy death, goes undaunted to Bethany and performs the loving act for his friends. Love for his friends is clearly shown to be stronger than love for his own life. But the hatred, envy, and jealousy of the Jewish church are so great that we can think only of demons.

We may compare this poem with the one on Forgiveness, where we saw a contrast of the human and divine love. But in this poem it is evident at a glance that the idealization is higher. In some respects the Confessional is like it, too.

THE TEN LEPERS

Luke 17:12-19.

One of Shakespeare's great themes is idealized in this remarkable poem. *Gratitude versus ingratitude* is idealized more highly in one respect at least than it is by the immortal Shakespeare.

The poem, brief as it is, raises us from the frigid zone of ingratitude to the torrid zone of gratitude. Delightful indeed is the transition.

Jesus is entering a certain village when he is met by ten lepers. In their agony they cry out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus' heart is touched, and he tells them to go and show themselves to the priest. But as they start off

they perceive that their leprosy is gone. One overjoyed, returns and with a loud voice he glorifies God, and falls down at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. This man is a Samaritan who would hardly be expected to render thanks to a Jew under any circumstances. Jesus being surprised that only one came back to thank him, says, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" Is it possible that only this stranger will "give glory to God?" And Jesus said unto him, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." The very men who are Jews and therefore are expected to be grateful, run off without ever showing the least gratitude.

This idealization is remarkable in that the ratio of gratitude to ingratitude is one to nine. Comparing this poem with King Lear, which has the same theme, we find a less ratio in Lear, it being there three to three. Goneril, Regan, and Edmund, who have everything for which to be thankful, are as ungrateful as demons; but Cordelia, Edgar, and Kent, who have nothing to be grateful for, are so thankful that their actions sparkle with a touch of the divine. Inasmuch as leprosy is the most fearful of all diseases, the nine lepers are more to be condemned for their ingratitude than Goneril, Regan and Edmund. Turning to the other side of the theme, the Samaritan really had everything for which to be thankful, and therefore his gratitude is not highly idealized like that of Cordelia, Edgar, and Kent. The only thing that surprises us in his case is, that he being a Samaritan, should return and be so fulsome in his adoration of Christ.

PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Luke 18:9-14.

The theme of this parable, according to Jesus himself, is *self-righteousness*. He tells us that the parable was spoken "unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." Jesus knew that this class would be large in the earth, and would therefore need this parable.

The movement in the poem is from the acme of braggadocio to complete self-renunciation.

The picture is a contrast between a self-righteous church member and a sinner. The two go up into the temple to pray. The Pharisee stands and brags to God as follows: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Not one thing does he ask of the Lord. He is good enough and he certainly wants the Lord to know it. Now Jesus, to show how utterly bad this hypocrite is, takes even a publican, an out-and-out sinner, and sets him over against this self-righteous braggart. But this sinner is indeed repentant, for he stands afar off and does not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven. Smiting his breast, he pleads, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Says Jesus very emphatically, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The repentant sinner pleads no good in himself, is completely unselfish, throws himself completely on the mercies of God. Indeed are we assured that God never turns down the broken and contrite heart.

Jesus' idealization here of a self-righteous spirit and also of a truly repentant one, is certainly very high. The contrast is striking. One type may be compared with the self-centered Cain, or in secular literature with old Shylock; the other, with the Prodigal Son. Repentance in the latter is more highly idealized so far as we have them in the divine accounts. In secular literature Sir Launfal's repentance is more elaborately worked out than in the parable given here. My Last Duchess, by Browning, presents a picture of selfishness just as revolting as the Pharisee is. In Browning's portrait we see a very saint of heaven, as it were, set over in contrast with the hog she has had to live with. This wife has been kind to every one, but the selfish husband forbids

her to smile on anyone except himself. Such a prohibition is too much for her. She pines away, and death soon relieves her of her burden.

Wordsworth in Lines has given capital expression to the Pharisee's state of mind:

"Be warned and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness * * *

The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works."

RICH YOUNG RULER

Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-23.

Three themes may be given for this scripture: (1) *The Deceitfulness of Sin*, (2) *Unwillingness to pay the price*. Both ideas are highly idealized. (3) *Riches*, an idol claiming *first* affections.

In this poem we are lifted from the ineffectiveness of the part to the effectiveness of the whole. Nothing short of complete surrender satisfies God.

A very wealthy young man comes running to Jesus, no doubt feeling that his own life is about right. Eagerly he asks Jesus: "What *good* thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus tells him to keep the commandments, and names over several to him. Exultingly the young man replies, "All these have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" So much as to say, "I am a pretty good man, am I not?" Jesus looks on the young man and loves him. The Master sees in the very bottom of the ruler's heart an idol which is being worshipped. This idol Jesus recognizes as having the young man's *first* affections. Therefore Jesus says to him, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross and follow me. And

when he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich." He has been deceived by a fairly good life, but Jesus' answer lays bare his sin.

His demeanor completely changed; we see him going slowly away, in contrast to the way he approached Christ. Money has his heart; he is not willing to *pay* the *price*. Up to this time he has not realized that the sin of money worshipping, idolatry, has been deceiving him. The text seems to convey the idea that he thinks he is a good man. He is in part, but he learns that the call of self, or selfishness, is stronger than the call of the poor and needy. His life except to close scrutiny seems almost like an ideal one. The young man's ideal tho is evidently too low. "All I need to do," thought he, "is to obey a few commands. Jesus will not require *all* of me." But this is just what he *does* demand, and nothing else will satisfy.

This poem may be compared with the Vision of Sir Launfal, Paul's Conversion, and the Prodigal Son. Sir Launfal is led to the point of complete self-surrender, with all his pride, haughtiness, conceit, and selfishness gone, before he sees the Holy Grail or divine acceptance. Just so Paul and the Prodigal are led to the same kind of a surrender before the light dawns. In the Pearl of Great Price and the Treasure in a Field, the man was willing to pay the price, to give *all*. So it is in the Ancient Mariner. Tennyson clearly pictures to us the deceitfulness of sin in Merlin and Vivien.

PRECIOUS OINTMENT

Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9.

This delightful bit of scripture has for its theme *Love's Sacrifice*. We are reminded by it of Christ's greater sacrifice because of his greater love.

The earnings of a lifetime, all she has in this world, are poured out by Mary in anointing her Lord. Rebuked by some of the disciples, she is defended by Jesus, who no doubt

sees in the act a type of sacrifice and devotion that has shone like a star down thru the ages.

Tho the hands that poured out the costly spikenard have long ago vanished into vapor, tho the perfume, which made redolent the atmosphere that day, has ceased to please the olfactories; yet the beauty and unselfish devotion of Mary's deed have become brighter and brighter as the ages have rolled on. Indeed will it always be told with pleasure as Jesus prophesied at the time.

In this we see the true nature of love. It has nothing that it will not freely, gladly give. It is more liberal, more sacrificing than anything else in the world. It finds its best expression in John 3:16. "God so loved the world that he *gave*." The divine gave *all* for us, sacrificed everything for us. One need have no fear as to whether or not he loves God, for love has but *one* nature; it gives, it blesses, it is devoted.

This poem may be compared with Enoch Arden, who gave his life because he loved his wife and children. He would rather die than mar their happiness. Again we see the same spirit in both Imogen and Hermione, who were willing to bury their wounded pride because of their great love for their husbands. That love sacrifices and that this is its essential nature, are borne out by all Bible teaching and hundreds of examples in secular literature.

MARRIAGE FEAST

Matthew 22:1-14.

Preparation is the theme idealized. Only too much in the world's life has this most essential factor in progress been overlooked or slighted.

The poor fellow in the text has overlooked the one thing essential—he has failed to robe himself in a wedding garment, just as myriads of others have failed. But when he is publicly rebuked and cast out forever, he realizes that carelessness in regard to preparation has been his eternal downfall.

This may be compared on basis of idealization with the antediluvians of Noah's day. When too late they realized their fatal mistake. Like millions of others, if they could have it to do over again, they would obey.

Poems in secular literature where preparation for the highest is emphasized, are Chambered Nautilus, Excelsior, For an Autograph, and The Ladder of St. Augustine. These four poems stimulate to the highest attainment. Preparation is seen as the one thing needful. This is not only true in the spiritual realm, but also in all other lines of action.

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
While the swift seasons roll."

"Greatly begin! tho thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime;
Not failure, but low aim, is a crime."

THE FIRST GREAT COMMANDMENT

Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34.

The theme here is striking: *God's claim of all of man's love*. This renders his life unitary.

A Pharisee lawyer asks Jesus what is the great commandment. Jesus at once seizes the basal principle of all the law and the prophets, and replies, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

If the idealizations given by Jesus were realized, it would heavenize earth. This world would blossom like the rose. The era of good feeling, real brotherhood, the fragrance of

the benevolent affections would fill the land. A fulfillment of this commandment would eliminate all half-heartedness, indifference, and faith without works.

To fulfill the requirements of these two commandments would necessitate a condition like the last state of the Ancient Mariner, Sir Launfal, the Prodigal Son, and the Apostle Paul. God takes a second place in no one's heart, his standards are the highest. One must make him first or claim no promises. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The brotherhood of man will never come about until these commandments are obeyed. What a revolution would be wrought in human activities if each would regard his neighbor as himself! With a sigh we say, "This sounds like poetry." We can live in ideality what is so much denied us in reality.

Other comparisons may be made with the Pearl of Greatest Price, The Treasure Hid in a Field, The Church as Bride of Jehovah in the Old Testament, and as the Bride of the Lamb in the New Testament. In Jesus we find the world's highest idealization of love. No mother was ever more of a friend, more of a helper, more of a lover. Jesus, after setting us the example of unselfish universal service, plainly says to us, "I am the way." God, the Father, is no less highly idealized as a lover, a friend, a helper, an inspirer.

THE VIRGINS

Matthew 25:1-14.

Probably in no other parable is *watchfulness* more highly idealized. Its terrible opposite, indifference or carelessness, is set over against it to heighten the idea. The reader passes from woeful indifference to beautiful watchfulness.

Ten virgins go out to meet the bridegroom. While waiting they all go to sleep; but suddenly a cry is heard: "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The virgins trim their lamps, but five discover, perhaps for the *first* time, that they have no oil, and that their lamps are *out*. They are in consternation and beg oil of their sisters, but are told

that it is now too late, that the oil cannot be lent for fear of running out themselves. The foolish virgins are sent to those who sell oil, that is, they are made to understand that there is something for them to do instead of lolling. "Work out your own salvation." While the indifferent, so-called church-members are gone out to purchase oil, the bridegroom arrives, and with the wise virgins passes in to the marriage feast, "and the door was shut." Finally the foolish virgins return and ask the Lord to open to them; but he replies, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." They learn the lesson, when too late, that only those who meet the requirements, who do something, who watch, who are ever ready, who have the oil of the Spirit in their vessels, who have *fully* accepted the teachings of Christ and are practicing them in their lives, *can possibly* become *one* with the bridegroom, that is, unite with him in marriage.

This poem, which shows the awful doom of the careless and the indifferent, and the glorious future of the watchful, the ready, the prepared, may be compared to the *Lotos Eaters* by Tennyson. These eaters of the enervating lotos plant have become entirely oblivious to all progress, to everything that costs one any effort; they have become the typically indifferent. On the other hand the parable may be compared with "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?" This idealizes watchfulness and makes it as heavenly as does that beautiful poem of Isaiah's, entitled "Watchman, What of the Night?" where God requires the blood of sinners at the hand of man if he does not give them warning.

TALENTS

Matthew 25:14-36.

In this parable we see activity, effort, *service*, personal stewardship, responsibility idealized. A great premium is put upon true service, while a severe penalty attaches to the sin of omission.

From unfaithfulness we are swept into the clean atmosphere of faithfulness. The ideal pointed out is a life of service which naturally results from a real vital touch with God.

The church is represented as being like a man traveling into a far country, who distributes his goods among his servants according to their ability to manage them. To one servant he gives five talents; to another, two; to a third, one. The first man bestirs himself, invests the talents wisely, and doubles his investment. The second servant does likewise; but the third, who needs activity more than do the other two, goes and hides his lord's money. After a long time the day of reckoning comes. The worthy men are first to report. With a glad heart the five-talented servant reports his success in winning five more talents. His delighted lord, patting him on the shoulder, so to speak, says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many; enter thou into joy of thy lord." The same good report is made by the two-talented man with the same reward. Now the fellow who has not been doing anything, the unfaithful church member, comes up moodily and grumbles out, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a *hard* man, reaping where thou *hast* not sown, gathering where thou hast not strewn; and I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine." The answer of the Lord to the old complainer, is what might be expected. He is called a wicked and slothful servant, and told what he ought to have done. The talent is taken from him and given to the servant who already has ten talents. The final doom is: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The fate of the unfaithful may seem fearful, but it is just; and so with the reward of the faithful. We are personal stewards of God's property, and God will call us to account for the *way* we have managed his goods—we cannot escape the sentence. The poem in secular literature which is called

up by this memorable parable is Lowell's Autograph. Here he nerves us to dare the highest.

“Greatly begin! tho thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime,—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.”

Excelsior, Chambered Nautilus and the Ladder of St. Augustine have the same ideal.

CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT

John 15:11-17.

To love one another as he has loved us is not his exhortation to Christians in this passage but his *command*. The force of this command and the fact that Christ means it fail, as a rule, to possess or take hold of the minds of church members.

Jesus tells his disciples that he has told them everything in order that their joy may be full. He, like a friend, has not kept anything back from them. He now says, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” Then immediately he shows them how great that should be. The very next verse is: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Then to clinch this he says, “Ye are my friends, if ye *do whatsoever* I command you.” In another place he defines love: “This is love, that ye *keep* my commandments.” Near the close of this poem in which love is so highly idealized, he connects love with fruit-bearing, showing that the former produces the latter.

No higher idealization of love is possible, for no one can do more than lay down his life for his enemy. This Jesus did. He ever practiced what he preached, thus re-enforcing his preaching in thunder tones of action. It is altogether impossible to misunderstand Jesus' meaning here, he having commanded us to love as he has loved, and having set us the

example. Nothing but the divine in man can attain to such divine commands and standards.

We see the apostles reaching this divine standard after Pentecost. Paul lived it and taught others to do the same. Scintillations of it flash forth in the characters of Evangeline, My Last Duchess, Desdemona, Imogen, Hermione, Enid, Hero, and Mariana.

CONSOLATION

John 14:1-5.

This brief bit of scripture is one of the most noted of New Testament poems. *Consolation* is given an idealization that renders it appropriate for funerals and all occasions where it is needed.

Jesus is about to leave his disciples; it is the evening before his death. Tenderly he says to them: "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me." He would not have them grieving over his departure. He continues: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you,—that where I am, there ye may be also." So much as to say, "I am going away to prepare a paradise for you, and some day I will come for you, because I want you ever with me." Just as a mother talks to her child or a lover to a sweetheart, so Jesus talks to his children. He desires us to be near him. If earth is so filled with beauty, what must heaven be with Jesus as its maker! Humanly speaking, we know what mansions are, but from a divine standpoint, what must they be? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God hath prepared for them that love him." All the oratory, all the rhetoric, all the prophecy, all the poetry of God's book, fail to give an adequate conception of the glories of the Land of Pure Delight.

The idealization of consolation nowhere else in the Bible is greater. The pictures permit of expansion ad libitum, and they are just such images as set the troubled soul at rest.

The Twenty-third Psalm may be compared with this poem. Each has great consolation for man.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Matthew 25:31-46.

The basis of this judgment seems to be *service* as given by the Savior. It is certainly suggestive.

The imagery of this story is on a grand scale. We see all the nations of the earth assembled; the righteous on one side, and the unrighteous on the other. In the midst of the unnumberable millions stands the Son of Man as judge. To the righteous he says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The righteous are very much surprised to hear the Master tell them of such menial service to him; but he replies, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the *least* of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The striking idealization consists in the fact that service to the *least* member of the kingdom is service done to Christ. It should be noticed too that Jesus mentions no *big* things that his followers have done, big things as the world goes; just simply feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, taking in the stranger, visiting the sick and those in prison.

The Master now turns to the unrighteous and pronounces their doom, for they have not done these things unto him. In great surprise they ask when they have had an opportunity to do such service to him. Again he says, "Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto the *least* of these my brethren, ye have not done it unto me."

Probably the Last Judgment is without a parallel, for the spectacle is almost unequalled in scripture; while the judg-

ment, being based on service to the least of his followers, is totally different from worldly on-going.

This poem cries in thunder-tones "service, service, service!" The religion of the loving heart and helping hand is Christianity. Churchianity may do to make a show with, but it will never pass at the judgment bar of God.

LORD'S SUPPER

Matthew 26:14-30, Mark 14:12-25, Luke 22:7-20.

The Lord's Supper is the world's greatest memorial. The Fourth of July commemorates our national freedom; but this memorial celebrates world freedom. The rainbow is a memorial in many colors, guaranteeing temporal safety from destruction by flood; the Lord's Supper gives a warrant for eternal safety. Its theme is *A Feast of Love or Devotion*.

Jesus, after he had performed the humble service of washing the disciples' feet, thus teaching one of the most needed lessons of life, that of humility, institutes the Lord's Supper. Prayerfully, reverently, the disciples partake of these universal significant emblems. The ceremony is made very simple by Jesus, no complexity entering into it. Jesus simply blesses each of the emblems and asks all of the disciples to partake of them in order.

Jesus on the morrow is going away from the Twelve and desires to institute a memorial by which they may remember him. He asks them to do this, telling them that "as oft as they do it they show forth his death until he come." In sorrow they meet with their loved Master, and tenderly have their last communion with him before his Trial.

In no memorial or Christian exercise, is there a more glowing picture of sacrifice and love for man, nor is the soul more stirred. Jesus giving his life on Calvary, the innocent for the guilty, is the world's masterpiece of love. One, in approaching such a scene and presuming to commune with such a pure being, feels that he must be in entire harmony with God. No unforgiveness can be harbored in the soul, or any

other sin which would cause the communicant to eat damnation to his soul. Not making it a feast of love or devotion, but observing it as a kind of formality, has caused many, very many to become weak as the Bible so clearly teaches.

JOHN 17.

This is often called the Lord's Prayer, and perhaps deserves this name more than the one so universally known as his prayer. The great and inspiring theme is *union*.

The point intended to be reached in the poem is union; the opposite point is division.

This is the poem of the universe, and is a masterpiece of organization. The Savior is about to leave earth. It seems but one thought engrosses his mind on the evening before his crucifixion and that is the oneness of his people. Usually a person prays for more than one thing; but not so here. How earnestly he prays, and repeats the petition five times, for the unity of his people, giving the reason twice "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The implication is that the world will never, while the church is divided, believe on him as the Christ, the Messiah.

Notice the sublime words of Christ more fully. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." A mother could not plead more passionately for children than the loving Savior pleads with his dying breath for the unity of his people. He pleads for a close union, one that binds like the love obtaining between him and his Father. He also shows that perfection can come about only by such a union. One of the most consoling features of the prayer is where

he tells us that the Father will love us as much as He loves Him.

When we think of the salvation of the world and the perfection of God's people hanging on Christian union, we see an idealization beyond which it is impossible to go. The setting of this prayer, being on the eve of his betrayal, gives it only a greater splendor.

On basis of idealization we fail to find a poem in secular literature with which to compare it favorably. The song, *Onward, Christian Soldiers*, has a similar sentiment but not the sublime imagery and idealization. "One in hope and doctrine, one in charity," is certainly a sublime sentiment.

PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

Mark 12:1-12, Matthew 21:33-46, Luke 20:9-18.

The theme of this parable is *selfishness*, the curse of the race. Perhaps the form of selfishness called greed would more nearly fit the treatment. Jesus in this parable gives the Jews their own photograph.

A householder elaborately fits up a vineyard, lets it out to husbandmen, and goes into a far country. At the proper season he sends his servants to receive the fruits of the vineyard. But the husbandmen beat some of them, kill others and stone the rest. Again servants are sent, with a like result. At last the lord of the vineyard sends his only son. When the greedy husbandmen see him, they say, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize upon his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him." The Jews answer correctly as to what ought to be done with such wicked men. But after Jesus refers to the stone which the builders rejected, he plainly tells them, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth fruits thereof." When the Pharisees perceive clearly what Jesus means, they attempt to lay hands on him but fear the multitude.

The idealization here is rather striking, for if honor is

not found in the church where can it be found? Of all places in the world we should most expect to find it here. Instead of honor we find grossest covetousness, and even murder. The Jewish church is not the only one that has rotted in its priesthood. No wonder the case against the rich man is made out so hard. No wonder we hear these words, "The love of money is the root of all evil." Selfishness, covetousness, pride, and worldliness are threatening to paralyze the church, says John R. Mott, the world-traveler. If the church would "seek first the kingdom of God" instead of reversing it and seeking first "all other things," the kingdoms of this world would soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. Man shows clearly by his actions what he most loves. Almighty dollar is too much the great god of the world.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

John 15:1-10.

Complete dependence upon Christ for life, is the theme of this well-known story. The figure is very vivid and suggestive.

Jesus says he is the vine and his followers are the branches. Just as a natural branch detached from the vine dies, so if a Christian becomes detached from Christ thru disobedience he dies spiritually. Jesus makes it very clear, too, that there must be an abiding of the branch in the vine and vice versa, for fruit bearing to result. Whenever this connection is broken thru disobedience, then, as Jesus says, we can do nothing; we are powerless; we are dead.

The idealization in this story is high, for Jesus clearly shows by his illustration that the Christian is *totally* dependent upon him for life. No other leeway is given. The sole means of keeping up this vital connection with Jesus is obedience.

PETER'S DENIAL

Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62.

The theme is *doubt*. It is given an idealization rarely met with in literature. We are plunged to an unexpected depth and are not brought back until later on in the gospel story.

This preacher has been with Jesus three years, has seen his wonderful miracles and more wonderful life, has heard God commending his son at his baptism, has been the spokesman of the apostles, and was the first to confess him as Lord; yet in an hour of danger, when Peter most is needed, we hear him swearing and lying, saying he does not know Jesus,—this man who a little while before had said, "Thou all else forsake thee, yet will not I." Considering the background of this denial and doubt, it seems colossal. It plainly shows that Peter feared man more than he did God, and that Peter has not beheld Jesus with that vision which he possessed after Pentecost.

This may be compared with John the Baptist doubting Christ. The latter, too, had baptized Jesus and had heard the words of God proclaiming him as the Christ; yet in a dark hour doubt set in, faith had begun to waver. Probably considering all the circumstances, Peter's doubt is more highly idealized.

Later on when Peter repents of his base denial, and is lovingly welcomed by Christ after his resurrection, he becomes one of the most devoted Christians of the world. He never forgot this incident and Jesus' kind treatment. He became as bold as a martyr in Jesus' defense, and was glad only to suffer for Christ's sake.

THE BETRAYAL

Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16, 46-47, Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11, 43-52.

Luke 22:1-6, 41-46.

Treachery is the awful theme of these and other related

scriptures. No worse idea ever found place in the heart of a demon.

Judas is an honored man of the Twelve, the treasurer of the company. He must have been an average disciple, or he would not have been so trusted. He has been in the blaze of the gospel and the wonder of miracles for three years. Judas himself has been out preaching and doing wonders in Jesus' name. With every evidence of Jesus' divinity Judas begins to slip, for Jesus calls him a devil a year before his fall. No doubt, he is stung by Jesus' evident knowledge of his guilt. Later when the sop is given him, he yields to anger at once and determines to do the deed at the earliest. His thoughts being evil, he can not bear the searchlight of Jesus' scrutiny. He betrays Jesus to his worst enemies for thirty pieces of silver, the price of an ordinary slave. In betraying him he leads a dastardly company by night and gives the sign, an effusive kiss, grossly misusing the most affectionate form of greeting.

Jesus goes forward and asks the armed company whom they are seeking. When he tells them that he is Jesus, they fall as dead men to the earth. They could not stand for the moment in the presence of his divinity.

Peter attempts to defend his Lord with his sword, but is made to put it up. Jesus touches Malchus' ear that has been cut off by Peter, and it instantly is replaced. Then all the disciples flee for their lives.

When Judas comes to himself and sees, as he says, that he has betrayed innocent blood, he is unable to stand it; therefore he goes out and hangs himself.

The idealization of treachery is very high here, because of the close and confidential relations between Judas and Christ for at least two years, because of the fact that he was one of Jesus' chosen preachers, and furthermore because Jesus was and is the light of the world, its maker, its life-giver, its inspiration, the central figure in all history, the inspiration of all man's greatest achievements, the one in whose power

rest the destinies of all beings in the universe. Such considerations show how colossal was Judas' treachery.

Both Biblical and secular literature as well as history and experience are filled with examples of this most heart-rending of all sins. There come trooping up to our mind Cain, Jacob, Joseph's brothers, Saul, David in his adultery, Macbeth, Richard III, Claudius, Edmund, Caesar's Conspirators, Iago, Aufidius, Proteus, Oliver, Don Jon, Wolsey, Geraldine, Vivien, the priest in the Confessional, Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr, and scores of others of equal note. The awfulness of the sin and the commonness of it are perhaps the reasons for it being made a type so often in the world's literature.

THE TRIAL OF CHRIST

Many have been the trial scenes of earth, but none so noted as this one in which the world's destiny was being weighed in the balance. The theme of this bit of scripture is, *Christian Bearing Up Under Fire*. It may be considered, too, as *Patience in Tribulation*, or one may view it as *Supreme Courage*.

In the scene we are horrified by the diabolism of the so-called church leaders; but on the other hand we are carried to the very throne of God by the Godlike actions of Christ while under false fire.

The church leaders jealous of Jesus' influence arrest him by means of treachery, their stock in trade, and, give him several false trials as do also the Roman authorities. These bitter Jews hire false accusers and conduct themselves as imps of Satan. Indeed has the Jewish church fallen into the hands of fiends; any divine light which it may have had, is now extinguished. Empty formalism, death-dealing in its application, is all that remains. Jesus, in the face of their base charges and furious actions, maintains the demeanor of a God. Tho slapped, spit upon, mocked, and even scourged until he is blood from the sole of his feet to the crown of

his head, he remains calm, usually silent, never answering except to rightful authority. His bearing thru all the fearful ordeal, when we know that at any time he could have exterminated the earth, is marvelous. He certainly verified his own teaching of returning good for evil and of turning the other cheek.

The Trial Scene stands without parallel in literature when we take into consideration the nature of the one tried, and the world consequences which have been the outcome of this trial. Judaism unconsciously was on trial for its life, and was found wanting; a new religion, Christianity, was established; the world was redeemed, and a new and universal era of righteousness was established. The new religion was to be worldwide in its teachings and influence. In this trial, too, Christ is seen as without a parallel in his Godlike bearing under such hot fire. Patience in Tribulation is given its best type. The Trial Scene in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Warren Hastings Trial dwindle into insignificance when compared with this world-renowned Trial.

GETHSEMANE AND CALVARY

Matthew 26:37-46, Mark 14:33-42, Luke 12:41-46.

In this sublimest of all poems we see the *power of love* given the highest known idealization, also *faith* is very highly idealized.

Jesus voluntarily goes into the garden, knowing he is to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He prostrates himself on the earth and sweats "as it were great drops of blood." Such suffering, such agony for even his enemies! For man's sake, because of his great love for man, he endures this torture. On Calvary he hangs for six hours, the innocent for the guilty. The sun refuses to shine on such a scene, and the earth shakes as a strong man in agony, the rocks being rent from the mountain side. He pours out every drop of his blood for man. This sacrifice is the world's turning

point. Such an exhibition of love had never been known. Somehow it has conquered continents for righteousness.

Calvary is the most sacred of mountains. Its baptism of blood and agony has given it a moral grandeur, an intense glory above all other mountains. The base of this mountain is on the earth, but its top is in the third heaven. The angels fly about it, but have never scaled its dazzling height.

This is the mount of suffering, the mount of power, the mount of victory thru faith and love. Seven hundred millions today tell the story of Jesus' power of love. Even his greatest enemies melt before this love. Compared with Geraint and Enid, Gareth and Lynette, Leontes and Imogen, the love shown on Calvary seems like the sun put by the side of a candle, for in each of these cases it is a wife, husband, or sweetheart winning a companion; this is natural. But Jesus winning continents of enemies to himself is God-like.

RESURRECTION

Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-11, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18.

The theme of this sublime Gospel poem is *victory over death, or conquest of death, or life by death*. In any case death is swallowed up in victory, in life, in rising, in hope. The terror to all life is itself destroyed.

"Oh death, where is thy sting?
Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

We see the almost absolute security of the sepulcher made so by sixty-four heavily armed Roman soldiers. They fade away like dew before the morning sun, as the angel descends and strikes them with terror, causing them to fall as dead men before his august presence. The ease of rising from the dead or thwarting man's actions is indeed absolute. Thus we pass from the seeming *absolute* of man to the *very* absolute of God.

In this poem is pictured a rising from sorrow to joy, from despair to hope, from death to life.

Science is silent before the open grave. It knows not. It does not try to know. It has to do with things, and such ever change. Science sees no further than the clods of the valley.

The philosopher, Socrates, says, "I think I see the golden islands, but, oh, that we had a stouter vessel, or a surer word." Plato, Kant, and other philosophers lift the veil a little and give glimpses.

But Holy Writ speaks in positive tones and gives us the "Stouter vessel, the surer word," of faith. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" That Jesus rose from the dead is the best proved event in history. The marvelous immediate change in the apostles, their death by martyrdom, the devoted life and death of Paul, Christ's undisputed appearances to more than six hundred people, with dozens of other incontrovertible proofs of the risen Savior, speak in thunder tones of resurrection hope. Then life would be a mockery without immortality. Man's divine equipment, too, argues for life everlasting. Does any really great man give out a thousandth part of his ideal self? Hugo said he does not. The Bible teaches that God is an economist, therefore the other nine hundred and ninety-nine parts will not be wasted. This poem stands without a parallel in secular literature, for man does not dare to sail a vessel on the eternal sea.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES

John 21:1-14.

The thought idealized in this story is the *human versus the divine*.

Seven skilled fishermen have been fishing all night, the very time when fish bite best; yet they have not caught a fish. A Stranger appears on the shore of the lake and tells them to cast their net on the other side of the boat. Tho this is a young inexperienced fisherman who gives this command, the old fishermen obey and are at once astonished by a draught

too great to lift into the boat. John says to Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter is so delighted and so eager to see the Master whom he has denied that he leaps into the sea and makes for the land. Other disciples come in little boats and help to get the draught to land. A fire is burning on the shore, and fish are broiled, and the disciples enjoy a never-to-be-forgotten breakfast with the risen Lord. It is during this breakfast that Peter is almost killed by the exceeding kindness of Jesus whom he has so recently denied. Putting his arm around him, Jesus says, "Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep." This is repeated three times in almost the same words, thus creating such an impression in Peter's mind as to make him one of the greatest lovers of Christ who has ever lived. The Godlike treatment of Peter by Christ is a lesson in thunder tones, indicating clearly the way that all family and church differences should be settled. Jesus says, "I am the way." When will man learn and practice the Jesus way?

Human weakness and divine power are set in strong contrast in this story. Man unaided by God, can do nothing. If man will stop a moment and think, he will see that this is literally true in the material world, God furnishing every law of the universe, whether it be in the mental or physical realm. It is just as true in the spiritual realm, and should be considered so. Thru obedience to the divine commands, putting ourselves in line with the divine, spiritual power comes to us. The story also shows the infinitesimally small treatment of Christ by Peter, and the Godlike love of Christ in return.

One is reminded of the draught of fishes secured when the disciples were told by Christ to launch out into the deep and let down their nets. Pentecost, Solomon's Porch, and in short the whole apostolic revival are suggested by this story. The stories in the Old Testament that have the same teaching are Gideon's band, Isaiah and Sennacherib, many of David's victories, Deborah's victory, Moses' triumphs, the

victories of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, and Daniel.

RESPONSIBILITY OF SPEECH

James 3:1-13.

James here idealizes responsibility in speech in an almost inconceivable way, for he first constructs what seems an impossibility and then proceeds to hold man responsible for not overcoming even an impossibility.

We can bridle horses and guide them; we can steer ships; we can tame every kind of bird and beast, but the tongue can no man guide or tame. The tongue boasteth great things, is a fire, a world of iniquity, defiles the whole body, sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire of hell. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. It both blesses and curses.

How can one infer anything but uncontrollability from such a description of the tongue's activities? Yet James says, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine, figs? Neither can salt water yield sweet." These are searching questions, they grip us. We must conclude that notwithstanding the seeming impossibility, that if a man "stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also."

The responsibility of speech has brought forth some of the strongest passages in literature, but nowhere else do we find it given such an adequate expression as in James. Some of the passages from other literature may here be given:

1. Let thy word be one.
2. Be swift to hear, and with patience make thine answer.
3. Glory and dishonor are in talk; and the tongue of a man is his fall.
4. Curse the whisperer and double-tongued.

5. The stroke of a whip maketh a mark in the flesh; but the stroke of a tongue will break the bones.

THE MASK OF LIFE

Pharisee has come to mean a mask; Pharisaical is synonymous with hypocritical. Of all things despicable to Christ, wearing a mask is the worst. At one time he turned his batteries loose on the practice, and never stopped until he had fired seven rounds.

He plainly shows the Pharisees that he sees thru their masks. He tells them they like to make long prayers on the street corners to be seen of men. He further shows them that they are very careful about making the outside of the platter clean but care nothing for the internal. They also tithe mint, rue, and all manner of herbs, but judgment and love of God are ignored. It is nothing for them to kill Christ, but it is awful for him to cure a sick man on the Sabbath day. They do not hesitate to pull the cow or sheep out of the sinkhole on the Sabbath, but on this day for an invalid of thirty-eight years' standing to be healed, it is a criminal offense punishable with death. These saints think it all right to devour widows and grind the poor. Jesus best portrays them when he says they are whited sepulchers, and within they are full of dead men's bones.

Throughout the gospels we find the Pharisees wearing the mask, making great pretense to religion when it is only Churchianity. In contrast we are delighted to see reality in Christ and his true followers.

We are reminded of Henry VIII, whose theme is the mask of life, where Wolsey and Henry pose as great saints. When the masks are torn off we see horrible monsters, especially in Wolsey. The life within and the life without receive perhaps their highest idealization here. The two phases of the life of Catherine, Wolsey, and Henry are just the opposite and are very striking.

Iago, Richard III, Edmund, Proteus, Polonius, Claudius, Macbeth, Oliver, all wear the mask; and these are not the only people throughout the ages who have worn this hypocritical instrument of concealment.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF LOVE

The theme which is so highly idealized in Tennyson's *Maud* finds a high idealization in the Gospels and Acts. We see John first a Boanerges, a son of thunder, so stormy is he. On one occasion he desires to have fire called down from heaven and destroy the Samaritans who would not receive Jesus in their midst. But when love possesses his soul, he becomes the most loving of men, a spirit like the Christ, so trustworthy and kind that Jesus leaves his own mother in his hands. All thru his five books his one overpowering, all-persuading theme is love.

Peter by nature is cyclonic, almost incapable of self-control. Even after he becomes a Christian he swears and lies shamefully, but when fully possessed on the Day of Pentecost, (this added to Jesus' loving treatment of him after his fall), he becomes a new man. Kindness, love, forgiveness, every form of righteousness characterize his actions. He could not do enough for Christ; indeed was he a transformed being.

Paul is one of the most remarkable examples of love's transformations. Burning with hatred against the Christians, whipping, imprisoning, torturing, and killing them, he is stricken down by the Lover of all the world. So great now becomes the transforming power of love in his life that he soon grows to be the world's greatest lover, the one who shows it the most. He becomes the bishop of two continents and seems to have a burning desire to bring the whole world to Christ by his own efforts. No more remarkable transformation has ever been known. Something happens when one wheels into line with the Divine.

Love is the world's panacea, to sweeten it, to take the poison of sin out, to blot out the hell of hate, envy, jealousy,

wrath, malice, and other malformations, and to usher in the heaven of kindness, trust, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, patience, and all normal actions. Love is the heaven of life, and if any man have it, the same is known of him.

JESUS AS THE IDEAL OF ALL IDEALS

1. JESUS THE IDEAL OF SERVICE.

Jesus is the world's greatest type of service. We see him ever about his Father's business. He hardly takes time to eat or rest. To both friends and foes he extends a helping hand, loosing tied tongues, unstopping deaf ears, opening blind eyes, causing the lame to walk, curing old chronic cases of twelve, eighteen, and thirty-eight years' standing, bidding leprosy and dropsy depart, raising the dead, feeding the hungry, cheering up the depressed, comforting the sorrowing, binding up the broken hearts, freeing the captives, weeping over the city that crucified him, blessing the man who lied and swore about him, and preaching the gospel to the poor. From the most menial service, as washing the disciples' feet, to the highest service of the church, he manifests the same beautiful spirit. Indeed is it his meat and drink to do the will of his Father in heaven. He seems never to think of himself, but always of the other fellow.

No idealization of service as in Herve Reil, Gareth and Lynette, or even Arthur in the Idylls of the King, compares with Jesus as an ideal of service. To find an approach to him we must go to John and Paul. These men wrote their names high by their unselfish service.

2. JESUS AN IDEAL OF PERFECT TRUST.

His trust in his Father, as shown at Lazarus' grave, Gethsemane and Mount Calvary, and a hundred other trying situations, is perfect. His trust is constant, never intermittent.

Jesus' trust in man is marvelous, for we see him committing to unlearned fishermen and men of similar stamp, the gigantic

undertaking of saving the world. He asks them to do it without any assessment of taxes, and with only one weapon and that is love. Again as a basis for trust Jesus is worthy of all confidence, for he above all beings has shown to the full his great love for men. Then no one has ever pointed out a blemish in his life. Every thing about it inspires confidence.

In the idealization of perfect trust we find no character equal to him, for no one ever trusted so much; or has been trusted so much, or by so many people. Some of the great Biblical heroes and heroines, as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Noah, Gideon, Deborah, Samuel, Joshua, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Ezekiel, Isaiah, John, Stephen, and Paul, are very close kin to Christ in the matter of faith. Their faith is marvelous, Godlike. Browning in many of his poems, as for instance, *Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, exercises a sublime degree of faith. A God-consciousness pervades many of his poems which makes Browning's readers feel that they are, as it were, in the very presence of the Divine.

3. JESUS AN IDEAL OF HOPE.

He is man's basis of hope, for he has fulfilled all of his promises thus far. No one ever meets his conditions fully but that he finds perfect fulfillment. Then Jesus is the same "yesterday, today, and forever." Since he has met every promise, man believes he will continue to do so, and for this reason his hope is steady, unwavering.

This hope that keeps the soul from sinking into despair is beautifully expressed in *The Fringed Gentian* and *Crossing the Bar*.

4. JESUS AS AN IDEAL OF CONSTANCY OF LOVE.

One of Jesus' best pictures of constancy is the *Prodigal Son*. This boy is an extreme case, but still the love of the Father remains constant. No man was ever lied about more than was Jesus, yet his love remained unchangeable. He was hounded and persecuted, driven from place to place until

his star went down in the dark atmosphere of Gethsemane and Mount Calvary; still he loved to the last, and even prayed for those who were driving the nails into his feet and hands.

Even the disciples continually misunderstood him and his kingdom, thinking it was to be temporal; but how perfectly poised he ever was with them! Thru all the storms of the most tried and tempted life of all the world, he never wavered. Offered all the world, he refused to consider it for a moment. The sins of all men were heaped upon him, causing him to sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane, yet his love for erring humanity remained unwavering.

Some persons in the world's literature who are noted for constancy of love are Desdemona, Hero, Viola, Imogen, Hermione, Julia, Silvia, Helena, Mariana, Kent, Cordelia, Edgar, Emilia, Horatio, Hermia, Evangeline, Annie, Enoch Arden, John Alden, The Prince, Enid, Arthur, Joseph, John, Peter, and Paul. These will ever shine as bright stars in the world's constellation.

5. JESUS AND IMMORTALITY.

Jesus having been with his Father from all eternity knows that the soul is immortal. To him it is never a question; he always speaks of it as a *fact*. He makes us feel that we are immortal. No other being has this effect on us. Poets like Tennyson, Longfellow, Wordsworth and Shakespeare have giant struggles with the question, but as we listen to Jesus' positive words, we are set at rest as to the question. No one in his writing or speaking has the God-consciousness that Jesus has.

6. JESUS AS AN IDEAL OF FRIENDSHIP.

A friend, according to the scriptures, is another yourself. Jesus fills out this definition. He will do more for you than you will do for yourself. He seems only to live for others. Having sacrificed his life for us once, he seems constantly to keep up the same deep interest in us.

A few quotations will best show the character of the

friend he is. "I will *never* leave you, nor forsake you." "Lo, I will be with you *always*, even to the end of the age." "I will be with you in six troubles, and in the seventh I will not forsake you." "I have called you friends." Every true follower of Christ knows these things to be a fact, and that, tho all others fail, Jesus *never* fails him.

Only the Father seems to compare with him as a friend. Says he, "Others may forget, yet will not I." "I have engraved thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

Friendship has been one of the favorite themes of poets. We love to contemplate the friendships of Jonathan and David, Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Timothy, Jesus and John, Bassanio and Antonio, Emilia and Desdemona, Horatio and Hamlet, Helena and Hermia, Beatrice and Hero, Damon and Pythias, Tennyson and Hallam. These are sources of light and inspiration to all who go their way.

7. JESUS AN IDEAL UNITY.

Unity, in its last analysis, means freedom, the highest ideal. In him is no duplicity, but complete harmony. He ever practiced what he preached; thought and action were one with him, and not at right angles.

He was ever one with his Father. He came not to do his own will, but the will of the Father. He completely carried out his Father's wishes and was at one with him. His love was just as unselfish and universal as that of the Father. Like the beautiful altruism of nature he blessed without making distinctions.

In the matter of his being in complete unity with God and the universe, no one has ever much more than approached him. Literary characters have as a rule been ideal in only one quality. Enoch Arden, Annie, Evangeline, and Enid are ideal in constancy; Kent, Cordelia, and Edgar, in faithfulness; Sir Launfal, in universal charity; Jonathan and David, in friendship; Paul, in faithfulness and devotion; Isabelle, in

purity; St. Agnes, in consecration; Simon Lee, gratitude; centurion, faith; Imogen and Hermione, forgiveness; Publican, humility. Some of these are ideal in other respects;—but Jesus, the ideal of all ideals, embodies in his life the sum total of all ideals in both secular and Biblical literature. Therefore he is the incomparable, a perfect unit.

8. JESUS AS AN IDEAL OF FORGIVENESS.

The whole scheme of redemption and plan of salvation has for its end forgiveness. Pardon is the sweetest and most beautiful idea in the Christian religion. Jesus, like a mother, forgives every penitent, no matter how dark has been his sin. Such pardon brings heaven to earth.

When Peter, having preached and followed Christ three years, curses and lies to the people, declaring he never knew Christ, Jesus puts an arm of love about him shortly afterwards and asks him if he loves Him. This question is repeated three times. It nearly kills Peter; he never did get over it.

Again, Jesus prays the Father to forgive the men who are driving the nails into his hands and feet. He could have hurled into eternity the court that so falsely and cruelly condemned him and scourged him, but he had mercy. In fact, Jesus' mercy and forgiveness all through his life are marvelous. They are among the most characteristic and remarkable of his virtues.

Jesus' forgiveness calls up the Father's mercy on Nineveh, on the erring Israelites on scores of occasions. Never did any one truly repent, but he found forgiveness. Again, Stephen's beautiful spirit comes to mind, also the forgiving spirit of Desdemona, Hero, Valentine, Viola, Hermione, Imogen, Laertes, and Orlando.

9. JESUS AS AN IDEAL OF COURAGE.

We almost marvel at Jesus' courage when we consider his tenderness and loving nature. We see him making a whip of cords and driving all that buy and sell out of the temple.

To do this single handed, seems almost impossible. He never winces in the presence of danger; other men steer clear of the fierce Gadarene demoniacs, but Jesus goes straight to them and bids the demons depart.

Jesus has the courage to tell all classes of men what they are. On various occasions he calls the Pharisees hypocrites, and always to their faces. He calls his best friend, Peter, Satan, when he needed the term applied to him. He says to a messenger from Herod, "Go and tell that sly fox." To the two on the way to Emmaus, he says, "Oh, fools and slow of heart to believe."

The Master ever stands by his convictions, tho often at fearful cost. He stands out against his very disciples to the last as to the spiritual nature of his Messiahship, and even at the risk of losing them on various occasions. Twice every one of them leaves him, and at Capernaum after preaching his sermon on the Bread of Life, he says to the Twelve after the Seventy had left him, "And will ye also go away?" At the Well of Samaria, for talking to a fallen woman, his disciples all leave, and it is four months before he wins them back; but Jesus is standing by his convictions at any risk. Again, it is Jesus' conviction that Christianity should be universal, and at the risk of his life on various occasions, and at the risk of losing favor with his own people, he proclaims such a doctrine. One of his deepest convictions is that hypocrisy should be exposed. Like Jeremiah of old he lets the hammer of doom come down on the Pharisees seven times. He never ceases to expose their nefarious double-dealing, even tho it finally costs him his life. He does right at any cost, and should be the only example of his followers, for he says, "I am the way."

Altho for two years he sees awful Gethsemane and bloody Calvary standing in the distance, he marches straight toward them. Like Paul, going up to Jerusalem, he can say, "None of these things move me." On being arrested his courage causes the whole mob to fall to the ground. Like a God he

goes thru the Passion Week. It takes God-like courage to endure what he did. He ever practices what he preaches, and this should convince any one of the sincerity and truth of his statements. Pilate and Mrs. Pilate are fearfully troubled because of him. He endures the scourging, the ignominy, the crucifixion. Never once does he wince but goes straight to the end like a God moving thru the world. What an example of courage!

Men who have approached him are Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, Paul, John and Peter. In secular literature and history there have been many heroic deeds, but in no case do we find such a connected succession of heroic acts with never an exception.

10. JESUS AS AN IDEAL OF FREEDOM.

Freedom is activity under law, and to be truest freedom, it must be activity under divine law. Jesus is the world's greatest exemplar of this divine idea of freedom. So much do we find him valuing freedom that he gives his life in order to make this freedom possible.

All thru his life he lives above the bondage of any kind of sin, in the beautiful atmosphere of liberty. Throughout the world men are bound by all manner of sin, but Jesus ever advocates complete liberty.

Not only from the bondage of sin does he set men free, but from the bondage of disease and ignorance. He believes in the complete man, freed in head, heart, and hand. Myriad are his releases of men, women, and children from various kinds of bondage. His beautiful emancipation acts have been the theme of poets, orators, and preachers of the ages. The emancipator of the world, the inspiration of mankind has been and still is Jesus. He has largely inspired the physical, mental and spiritual means by which the world has gone mounting up the heights. He is the incomparable.

11. JESUS AS AN IDEAL OF FILIAL DEVOTION.

One of the most beautiful ideals in literature is filial de-

votion. Cordelia's and Edgar's devotion to their fathers, is beautiful. One gives her life for her father who has so mistreated her; the other is *willing* to do so. Portia's devotion to her father's will has given her the admiration of the ages. The ingratitude of a Goneril, a Regan, an Edmund has been put in painful contrast by the poets.

Just so, one of the most beautiful traits of Jesus' life is his great devotion to his Father. He says, "I came to do thy will, O God." "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." "Not my will, but thine, be done." "I and my Father are one." How beautifully one they were! No wonder Jesus could say,

"Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be *thy* name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven."

So much does Jesus think of his Father that we find him time and again talking to him all night. In fact, at all times he is on good speaking terms with the Father, praying to him about everything. Jesus is our model, for he says, "I am the way."

No one seems ever to have been more devoted to a father than Jesus to his Father. At the last, when for a moment the Father turns his face from the Son, Jesus cries out, "My God! my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

12. JESUS AS A TYPE OF GRIEF.

As a type of grief Jesus does not seem so highly idealized as even Jeremiah, for he was called the weeping prophet. In no place in the Bible in connection with Jesus do we find such an idealization of grief as we do in "Tears, Idle Tears," "Break, Break, Break," or "In Memoriam." Perhaps the reason is, Jesus had greater insight and saw quite beyond the ordinary vision of men.

But we do see him at Lazarus' grave weeping. "Jesus wept." He, no doubt, wept over their unbelief. Again, we see him standing on a mountain above Jerusalem, weeping, saying, "Oh Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood, under her wing, but ye would not." Such lamentation over the city that had treated him so cruelly, and which would so soon crucify him, is remarkable. He weeps because of their blindness, their indifference to all their God-given privileges.

Jesus' attitude usually seems to be against grief. The last week of his life he says to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled." He would not have them troubled over his leaving them, for, as he said, "It is expedient that I go away." Then, too, he is going away to prepare a place for them, and he promises to return for them and take them to be with himself. At another time, when on his way to Calvary, he tells the women not to weep for him.

Paul is very much like Jesus on the subject of grief. Altho he seems to have had more cause for grief than Jeremiah, yet he never writes any Lamentations; but even while in prison we hear him singing with Silas, and praising God. On another occasion while in prison, he breaks forth, "Rejoice and again, I say rejoice. Rejoice always, rejoice evermore." He could say, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." God and Christ are vivid realities to him, and being ever in touch with the Infinite, he keeps up his spirits. This triumph of the soul over its sorrow seems to be a divine ideal.

In the Rainy Day, The Star Mars, Psalm of Life, Footsteps of Angels, and In Memoriam, we see the soul rising up out of its grief as conqueror.

13. JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD RESTITUTION.

This is clearly shown in the case of Zaccheus, who had ever lived a life of righteousness, and yet had grown wealthy. Being eager to see Jesus, he goes to considerable trouble in

order to make sure. As Jesus comes up to the tree which Zaccheus had climbed, the Master tells him to make haste and come down, for he wishes to dine with him that day. The little fellow slides out of the tree in a hurry, and immediately begins to speak of restitution. "The half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken *any thing* from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." And Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come unto this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus sees at a glance that the man has the right spirit, and it is enough for him. One who is not willing to make restitution need not expect pardon from Jesus.

This condition of salvation is not so often mentioned as some of the others, but it is no doubt as essential. It was a well known custom among the Jews. Somehow secular litterateurs have failed to see its beauty.

14. JESUS AND HEROISM.

The world has ever admired and honored its heroes. The Savonarolas, the Latimers, the Riddleys, the Daniels, have caught the heart of the great. But no one has ever equaled the Christ as a real hero. By the consensus of opinion of mankind he is the only one who always had the moral courage to stand for the right. To do it meant no place on which to lay his head; tho it meant unpopularity, persecution, hounding, being despised, forsaken, rejected, scourged, and hanged; tho it meant the midnight darkness of Gethsemane and Mt. Calvary, yet he never once swerved from his convictions. The *real* hero is the man who has the courage of his convictions and will die for them if necessary.

Jesus stands without a parallel in this respect. Henry V is a great type of heroism and moral balance, immortalized by Shakespeare. But how does he compare with the Christ? How has his heroism affected the ages as compared with that of the Christ? While as a man he was truly a great hero,

yet when we measure the two, side by side, there is little comparison. Paul, Moses, Peter, and John were greater heroes than Henry V when measured by world consequences.

15. JESUS AND PATRIOTISM.

Patriotism has been the favorite theme of about as many poets as has love, but it is, perhaps, without exception, national. Even tho it may be typical, it is only what a native will do for his *own* country, and *not* for another country, or the world, as is always the case in the Jesus-or-God-type of patriotism. Universal unselfishness is the heavenly atmosphere of divine patriotism.

Our Declaration of Independence was from political tyranny; the divine declaration of independence is from all sin, and is worldwide. Freedom in either case is obtained at great cost; but in one, greater than in the other.

Even in places in the Bible, we find the narrow national ideal of patriotism, just as we do in secular history. Deborah's patriotic song of deliverance exults over the destruction of her enemies. To the Jews all the Gentiles were barbarians, devilish; but to Jesus, they were brothers along with the Jews. Beautiful! Even John had the leprosy of narrowness, desiring to stop one who was casting out devils in Jesus' name just because he followed not with the disciples. Peter was so full of prejudices that it took two miracles in one case of conversion to convince him that the Gentiles had any Christian rights. The Jews in general were afflicted with the same disease of narrowness; they could not bear for Jesus to say a word of praise for Naaman or the widow of Sarepta. They have all kinds of kinfolk in this day and age of the world.

What a contrast between the Jewish exiles of Babylon, and Paul, a prisoner in Rome! They pine and fret for native land and the old church at Jerusalem, but Paul busies himself converting the Romans, his captors, and establishing a church in Rome. Paul is Christlike in his patriotism.

The Jews arrogated to themselves alone salvation, but

Jesus says, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the gospel to *every* creature." Such universal love, sympathy, and unselfishness belong to world patriotism. It would free a China, a Japan, a Dark Continent as quickly as an America. It, too, would free from bondage of every kind; while as a rule national patriotism concerns little more than political evils.

The idealization could not be higher, for no one could give more than Jesus did, nor could the extent of the universe blessed be greater. The idealization stands without a parallel, altho secular literature has scores of patriotic poems.

16. JESUS AND POWER.

The human mind has ever been impressed with the idea of great power. It has made much of its heroes, those who have wielded great power.

One characteristic of Jesus, which is almost if not as great as his love, is power. We see him easily swaying the multitudes as no other man ever did. He speaks to the winds and waves, and they lie down as gentle as a lamb. To deaf ears he says, unstop, and the melodies of the universe go trooping in at eargate. To blind eyes he says, open, and the delightful scenes of nature flood the soul. To tied tongues, he says, unloose, and they speak forth the praises of God. To chronic diseases of twelve, eighteen, and thirty-eight years' standing Jesus says, depart, and these long-bound victims leap forth into the freedom of health. We see him, too, praying all night on the mountain, and the next morning the waters become solid rock under his feet. In case of scarcity of food he has power to feed multiplied thousands with five small loaves and two little fishes. When asked to be king, he unlike other men has power to resist the temptation. Demons who were a terror to all others, bow to his authority. Diseases of every kind, even leprosy, disappear at his word. By him God makes every world that whirls in space, and without him is not any made. He is the maker of the universe, and the source of all of its power. Death flees from him

as dew before the morning sun. He has but to call and the putrified Lazarus comes forth. Probably greatest of all, he has absolute control over himself, never permitting himself to yield in the least to temptation. He is unlike all other men in this respect. Earthly power and possession appeal to men, but not to Jesus; he ever sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, just as he tells man to do. In Gethsemane and on Calvary, he voluntarily lays down his life, and in the short space of three days he bursts the bars of death, conquers the mighty terror of earth, takes captivity captive, and blazes forth on earth and in heaven to shine forever more. The best proved fact of all the world is Jesus' resurrection. Standing on Olivet's brow he easily rises and glides away from earth. Today he has seven hundred million followers, the greatest of any being who ever lived, even tho he seemingly was unschooled, was despised, forsaken, rejected, scourged, and hanged. His power and love are heavenizing earth; continents are coming to him, the dark places of the earth are all becoming lighted up. He discards all weapons of ordinary warfare and tells others to do the same, conquering by the power of love. Indeed have the poets of civilization found love to be the only conqueror.

It is useless to suggest a comparison unless it be God, for Jesus is the incomparable so far as earthly beings are concerned. In fact, all that is ascribed to God can be predicated of Christ. All power was given to Christ after his ascension and enthronement. Had he not all love, we might fear such great power, but love and power going together make our Elder Brother the most delightful, helpful, and inspiring companion and friend ever known to man.

17. JESUS AND CONVICTION.

To any real student of Jesus' life, his very name seems almost to stand for conviction. Tho the heavens should fall he would utter his convictions. For instance, in the gospels he has a conviction as to the awfulness of the sin of hypocrisy.

At the peril of his life he rained his multiplied woes on the hypocrites. For continuing to oppose these Pharisees he finally loses his life. But love of life to him is not as strong as love for his convictions.

Jesus has the strongest conviction on service, humility, mercy, consecration, power of love, selfishness, faithfulness, unfaithfulness, indifference, readiness, courage, devotion, doubt, sacrifice, unity, preparation, constancy of love and faith, retribution, persistency, gratitude, ingratitude, forgiveness, friendship, providence, consolation, immortality, freedom, unbrotherliness, patience, peace, loving our enemies, obedience, duty, resignation, intolerance. He does not hesitate to speak in unmistakable terms in regard to these, and to exemplify all the good ones in his own life.

Altho he could see Gethsemane and Calvary in front of him he never once wavered in his conviction on any life principle. He sets his followers an example and says to them, "I am the way."

Stephen in the great speech which caused his stoning is a good comparison. To Stephen, God's word is a conviction, and tho it costs him his life, he does not hesitate to let his accusers see themselves in the proper light. He also gives the true genesis of such monsters, and when they see their frightful visages in the mirror he is holding up, they demonstrate their monstrosity by their actions. Paul is another Stephen, another Christ, in conviction. They may whip him five times with thirty-nine lashes, three times with rods, stone him, imprison him most of the time, crucify him, but he will not waver in his convictions as to the gospel. He is fully aware that to cross Judaism and embrace Christianity means an awful life of suffering and even a terrible death, yet his life is not as dear to him as are his convictions.

The great need of any age is mountain-like men, men as unalterable in their convictions as Paul or Jesus. Such men shape destinies. Jesus goes forth, and the world becomes new. Paul shakes the continents as he walks up and down them.

John Wesley appears, and true Christlike devotion characterizes the people of God.

In German politics Bismarck comes on the scene of action, and national unity results. Garibaldi and Cavour appear in Italy, and the same great blessing results to this wretched land. Washington rises above the western horizon, and England hies away toward the Orient. Freedom spread her wings and has never ceased soaring. Only recently she has overturned the Celestial Empire and is now powerfully disturbing the cruel Turks. Only man's convictions have moved the world; whims, opinion, and half-hearted desires have been its curse.

18. JESUS AND NATURE.

Like Wordsworth, Bryant, and many other poets, Jesus sees nature teaching divine lessons. He makes nature the basis of his parables, and thus drives home some great lessons. The sower, the tares, and the grain of mustard, are good examples.

What a great lesson he draws from the "lilies of the field" and the "sparrow!" The goodness, tenderness, beauty, and providence of God are so clearly brought out by these. The comparison of the lily with Solomon is a flash-light illustration.

We are further told that it rains on the just and the unjust; also the sun, moon, and stars shine on the good and evil. Such altruism never obtains among men. Nature is as unselfish as God himself.

Perhaps no other author has ever excelled Jesus in this particular phase of nature. Longfellow in *The Bridge* calls the moon a "symbol of love in heaven." Wordsworth tells us that "nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Both Wordsworth and Bryant draw us closer to nature than does Jesus. They all but deify it; to use Wordsworth's own terms, they make "nature all in all."

19. JESUS AND HUMILITY.

Humility is one of the most beautiful flowers of human

activity. It graces Jesus' actions as much as modesty does a true lady. Maker of all mankind, yet Jesus is called our elder brother; King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, yet he delights to call himself the Son of Man; Creator of the Universe, yet he calls himself a servant.

Watch his actions in the Upper Room. He girds himself with a towel, takes water, and performs the menial service of washing the disciples' feet. Could one conceive of greater humility? See him riding into his capital city, Jerusalem, on a barebacked mule. How different from all kings of modern times! Pride to him is a stranger, for it belongs solely to his arch-enemy. In all of his actions he moves with the humility of true greatness.

A character so universally marked by humility is not to be found in secular or Biblical literature, nor in history. In *The Ode to the Duke of Wellington* we find the Duke a good type of humility. The element was almost foreign to Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon. In fact, humility is chiefly a plant of modern growth. Tho a Christian virtue taught man by the Infinite, yet its development has been exceedingly slow.

20. JESUS AND GLORIFICATION.

The mount of ascension is the mount of victory, the mount of glory. Jesus sweeps away from the limited into the unlimited. He is crowned King, all power being given into his hands. He goes forth to conquer a sin-cursed, iceberg world not by arms, not by force, not by appealing to low motives as do the Mohammedans, but by appealing to the highest in man, by using the one weapon, love, which has proved itself a world conqueror. Seven hundred millions of people today worship him in some manner. God in a measure had failed to reveal himself and conquer the world in his plans before the Advent, but Jesus' loving heart is taking the world.

In Revelation we see this same glorious Christ being the only one worthy to open the book which has the seven seals.

Christ in Revelations is made to shine with all the glory of the God of the universe. He shines as all heaven itself, greater glory could not be given to God than is bestowed upon Jesus. The Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed attests this fact.

Only in a less degree do we see glory ascribed to him in the vivid comparisons made in the opening chapters in Hebrews. In fact in many places in the Scriptures, glory in dazzling splendor is heaped upon Jesus. The most striking of these scriptures is in Revelation. "And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing!' And every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them heard I, saying, 'Unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing and honor, and glory, and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'"

Approaches to the idealization are seen in the Doxology and All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.

21. JESUS AND SPIRITUAL CONQUEST.

This great idea is vividly portrayed in the Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed, where Israel as the servant of God is appointed to conquer all the nations of the earth by love. Not by the Hammer of all the earth hammering down the nations, not by the great Axe cutting the nations to pieces, not by the great Cup making all the nations drunk; but by love, by spiritual means as gentleness, persuasion, kindness, by the irresistible illumination of "light" as it is so beautifully imaged. The means of conquest were to be totally revolutionized. But alas! how long it takes to understand God! The exiles returned and began with the sledge hammer blows of their Babylonian conquerors. In Chronicles we find, "Whosoever

would not seek the Lord the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman." Then for fifteen centuries the axe, the torch and other means of torture were used. Persecution! persecution! It seems that man could not realize that force cannot conquer spirit.

We see in the Rhapsody Jesus as he would go forth to conquer the world by love, yet it was Greek to those people and has been to most nations since. Practically all the attributes of Jesus that we find in the Gospel in Reality we find in the Gospel in Prophecy.

Jesus comes a fulfillment of prophecy. We see him first settling the question as to the nature of his Messiahship; it must be spiritual. Then we see him going about for three years, doing good, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing, binding up the broken-hearted, feeding the hungry, raising the dead. He touches the cradle, and it becomes sacred; he touches marriage, and it becomes Christian; he touches home, and it becomes a paradise; he touches the church, and it becomes the sky-pointing monument of the age. Persecuted, he does not persecute; hounded, he does not retaliate; pursued, he does not pursue; despised, he does not despise; forsaken, he does not forsake; rejected, he does not reject; condemned to death by the Sanhedrin for raising Lazarus, he does not doom them; hated by his enemies, he loves them; attacked by a mob, he heals the ear of Malchus, one of their men; falsely accused, he does not accuse; mocked, he does not mock; scourged, he does not scourge; nailed to the cross, he prays for his murderers; killed, he gives a world of life, love, peace and joy. When, oh, when will the world appreciate Christ's way of doing! He says, "I am the way." He forbade the use of any weapons but love, and by it alone he has now seven hundred million followers in the world!

A red streak of persecution by force runs from the cross to the present. The history of these conflicts is black with sin. Jesus desired that all of his followers be one happy loving family, thinking of one another as he thought of the

Father, but alas, the jangling divisions are enough to make the Christ sick! He came to give peace, happiness and freedom; but divisions have given discord, misery, and bondage. Rare souls, tho, are seeing more and more clearly, like the Christ, that truth is one, that God is its source, that we must come to be a loving family, and that love which makes a universal brotherhood is to be the only solution of the world's vexing problems.

No poem in secular literature can be found where one being is to spiritualize and heavenize all the nations of the earth by means of love. To no man was such a task ever given or ever thought of. Jesus is unique in this, the supreme conqueror of the world by the weapon of ideals.

22. JESUS AND EXALTATION.

In the fourth vision of the Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed we see a sublime exaltation of Jesus. All the nations of the earth break forth in praise, adoration, and even utter astonishment that one born in the lower walks of life, comparatively unschooled, a carpenter, a very poor man, without comeliness of form that men should look upon him, without beauty, that men should desire him, despised, rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, not esteemed, wounded for man's transgressions, bruised for man's iniquities, the bearer of all of man's sins, oppressed without offering resistance, led to the slaughter without returning a word, scourged, numbered with the transgressors, cruelly crucified, buried with the wicked; that such a one should suddenly become the turning point of the world's history, the idol, the worshipped of all nations, the inspiration of literature, science, and art, the real source of all true greatness! With such a background and such an outcome no reasoning man can say anything else but God! God! The only explanation of the Jesus of history is God manifest in the flesh.

It is useless to think of secular literature furnishing a

parallel to this poem or even Biblical literature except as we go to the gospels in reality.

23. JESUS AS AN EXAMPLE OF LIVING UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE HIGHEST.

Even as a twelve year old boy he exemplifies this principle. When he is reminded, in the temple, of his relation to his parents, he replies, "Wot ye not I must be about my father's business!" This shows a choosing of the highest relation.

In the temptation in the Wilderness he is offered food for the physical man when he is ravenously hungry, but he promptly chooses the spiritual first. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." A little later he is offered the whole world, if he will but worship Satan, but he instantly says, "Get thee behind me, Satan." In this temptation he chooses the spiritual nature of the Messiahship instead of the temporal.

All thru his life he knows that the Jews as well as his own disciples are against him because of his emphasis of the highest in life, but he never wavers. When preaching the sermon on the Bread of Life in the Capernaum synagogue, he keeps up this high strain, realizing its cost to him. The seventy leave him, and the twelve seem to waver in their loyalty. "And will ye also go away?" he says to them.

For three years he struggles up Mount Calvary to bring earth up to heaven, but he finds people of the earth earthy. He is compelled to die for the principle of the highest amidst the jeerings of a hate-cursed people and the convulsions of both earth and sun. This is certainly sublime!

To compare Jesus with the youth in *Excelsior* seems belittling to the Divine. World consequences hang on the actions of Jesus in regard to the highest, for he is becoming the world's ideal.

24. JESUS AND PRAYER.

Prayer is more highly idealized by Jesus than by any other being. He prayed about everything, and had regular

habits of prayer, as well as places for it. He raised prayer to the *nth* power by his emphasis of it.

His early life is spent in a prayerful home. All Christian observances found place in that home.

At Jesus' baptism we see him praying, and the heavens opening to rain the Spirit upon him. The highest commendation is here given him by his Father. All great things come to him in times of prayer.

Three times it is recorded that he prayed all night, and these are only types of many other times. Before the world-renowned Sermon on the Mount he prays all night. After feeding the five thousand the multitude desire to make him king. He dismisses them and goes on the mountain to talk with the Father all night. He, no doubt, was tempted, and therefore needed help. On Transfiguration Mountain again we see him praying all night, the disciples being asleep. He is transfigured but not they. His face shines like the sun, but not theirs. His raiment is white and glistening, but not theirs. The immortals visit him and lay the law and prophecy down at his feet. Out of the midst of the Shekinah light the Father once more speaks so commendatorially of his Son. "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

Coming down the mountain he finds a demon-possessed boy whom the disciples cannot heal. After Jesus heals him, he tells the disciples they failed because they had not been praying. "This kind cometh not out but by fasting and prayer."

Staying all night with Peter in Capernaum, he is not found in his room the next morning, tho the host early knocks at his door. Altho he had been up late the night before he rose early and went to a quiet place for prayer.

We read too, that he taught his disciples to pray, giving them that masterly comprehensive prayer which every child knows.

But it is in John 17 that we find the real Lord's prayer, a pouring out of the great Christ heart to the Father that all

Christians should always be one as he and his Father are one. Five times he makes this earnest appeal to the Father, giving twice as a reason for doing so, that the world might believe that the Father had sent him, implying that without unity of the Church the world would never believe that he was the Messiah. When we think of this being given on the evening before his death on the cross, it becomes dramatic to us.

After Lazarus has been in the grave four days, Jesus prays to the Father, and commands the dead man to come forth. Prayer is indeed power!

In Gethsemane Jesus prays in an agony, his blood-vessels actually bursting. Such earnestness! Such concern! It is here the world is saved by prayer. On Calvary the resolutions of the Gethsemane hour are carried out. Even on the cross Jesus prays three times, so great is his concern for his crucifiers and fun makers.

These are only a few of the incidents in his life connected with prayer. At one time he said, "Men ought always to pray." Paul's famous sentence, "Pray without ceasing," has the same meaning.

Prayer is beautifully spoken of by Longfellow in Sandalphon, by Tennyson in Saint Agnes' Eve, by Shakespeare in Hamlet, and by dozens of other secular poets; but nowhere do we find the height of idealization as it is given us in connection with Jesus' life. The greatest exemplars of it in the Bible are Paul, Daniel, the disciples, Abraham, Jacob, Isaiah, and Hezekiah. Daniel is so busy with the affairs of a great empire that one might think he had no time to go over on the river and hold a prayer meeting for twenty-one days. This is the longest prayer meeting recorded in the Bible; the next longest is Pentecost. This same Daniel valued the prayer hour more than he did his life when he deliberately chose the lions' den. Such a conviction would revolutionize the church.

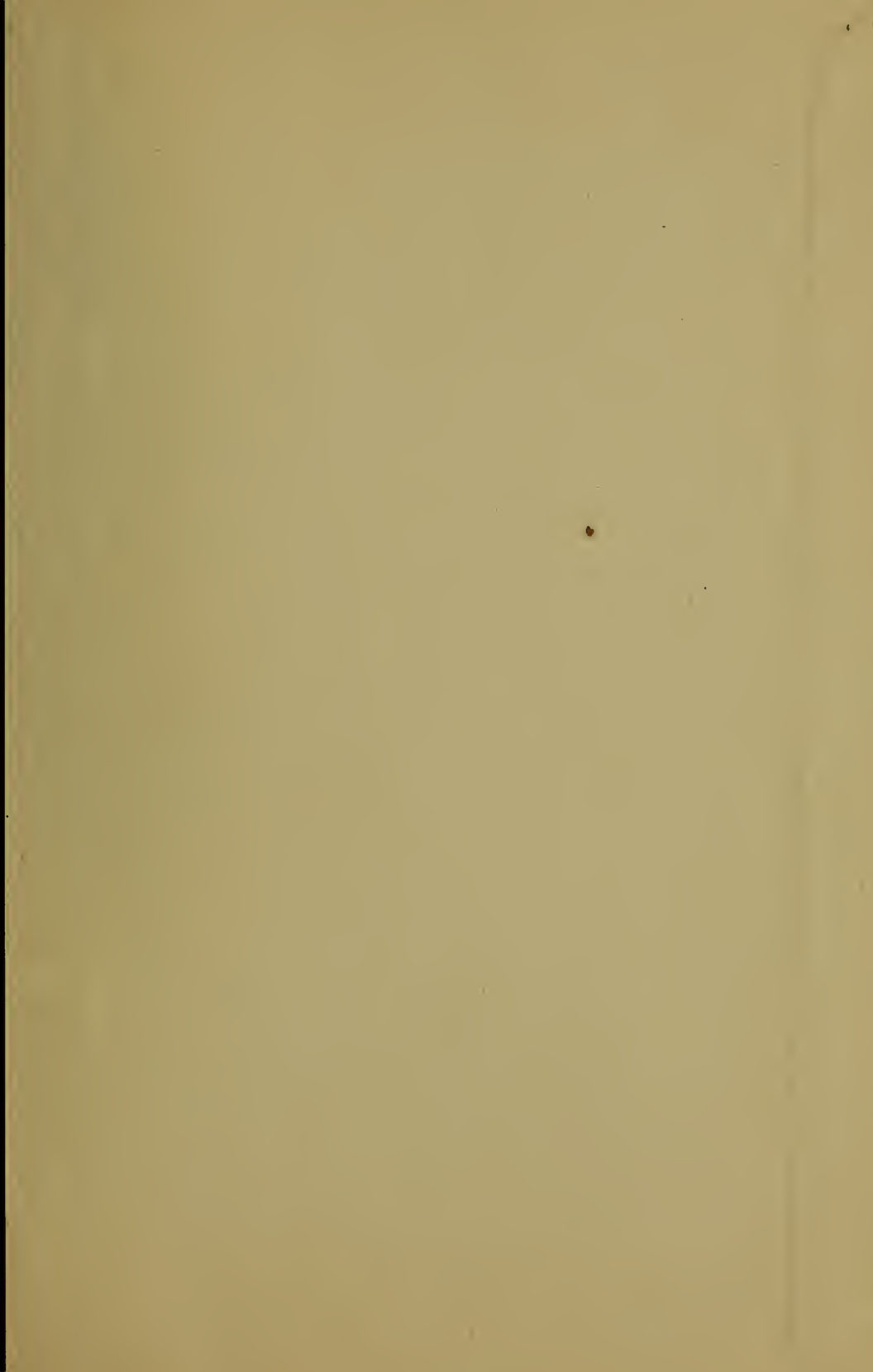


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